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**Strategy column**

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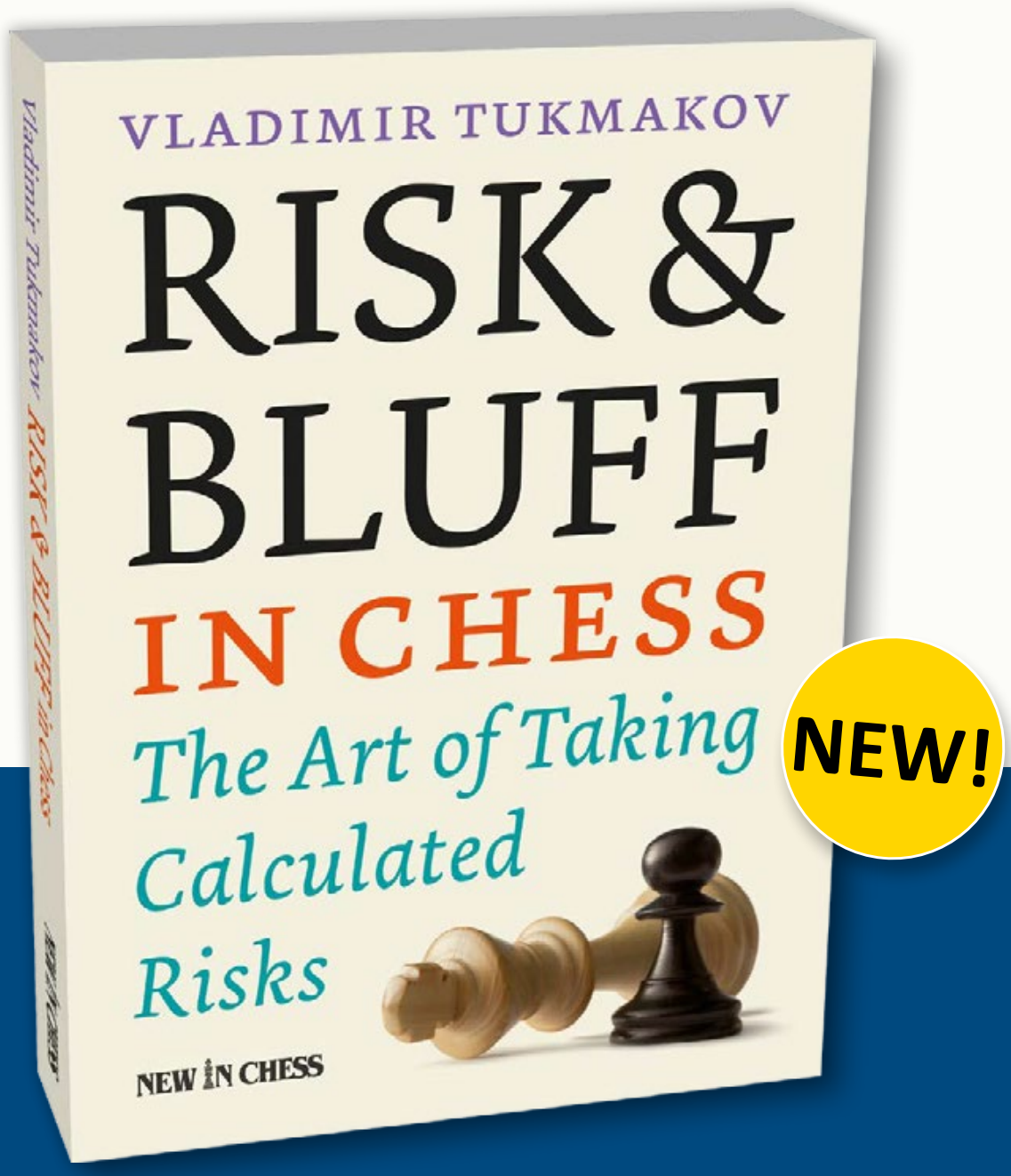
## Veselin Topalov
## 'Many players can beat Magnus'

**Walter Browne**
**remembered by Jan Timman**

ISBN 978-90-5691-580-3

# You can't win without taking risks




No matter how deep you calculate, there always comes a point where you have to deal with uncertainties and take a decision. Renowned chess coach **Vladimir Tukmakov** presents more than 100 practical ways that masters and grandmasters have used to push beyond the limits of calculation. After studying this book, with its many fascinating examples, you will think twice before wasting an opportunity to do what even the greatest players do: bluff your way to victory!

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*– Judit Polgar*

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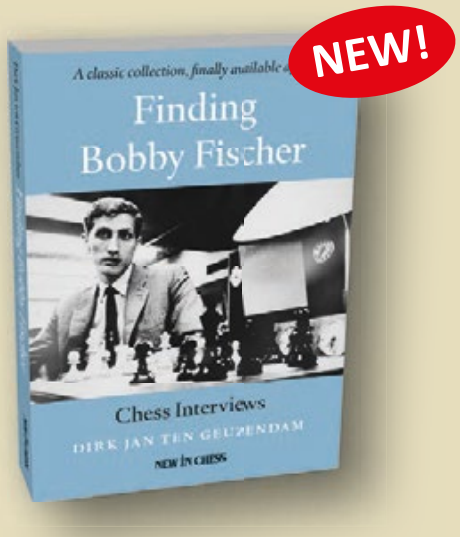
# Some recent NEW IN CHESS books

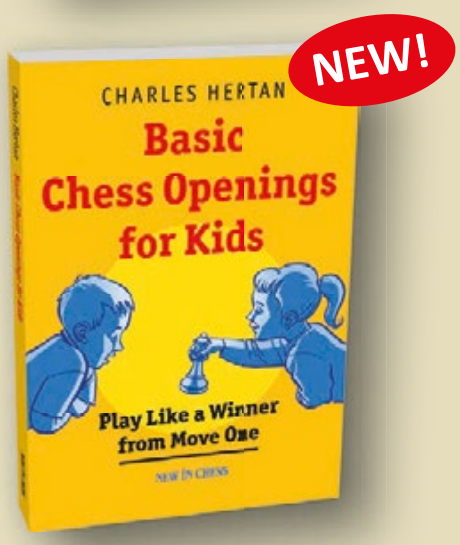



## Finding Bobby Fischer

*Chess Interviews*

**Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam** 272 pages - €24.95

A classic collection, finally available again. Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam's gripping encounter with Bobby Fischer, a journalist's dream come true, is the apotheosis of this collection of interviews, which were first published in New In Chess between 1986 and 1992. Brimming with anecdotes and revealing insights these interviews bring together chess champions of past and present. Meet legends like Botvinnik, Gligoric, Portisch, Spassky and Karpov, or modern stars like Kasparov, Anand, Kramnik and Judit Polgar.




## Basic Chess Openings for Kids

*Play like a Winner from Move One*

**Charles Hertan** 160 pages - €18.95

Traditional chess opening books concentrate on the variations in different openings. Charles Hertan believes that for beginners and advanced beginners memorizing lines is not only boring but also a waste of time.

Hertan's approach is different. He helps kids to develop a solid understanding of the fundamental opening principles.

This is a fun, easy-to-use, down-to-earth and accessible chess opening primer.

NEW!
JOHN WATSON & ERIC SCHI
TAMING WILD CHESS OPENINGS
How to Deal with the Good, the Bad and the Ugly over the Chess Board
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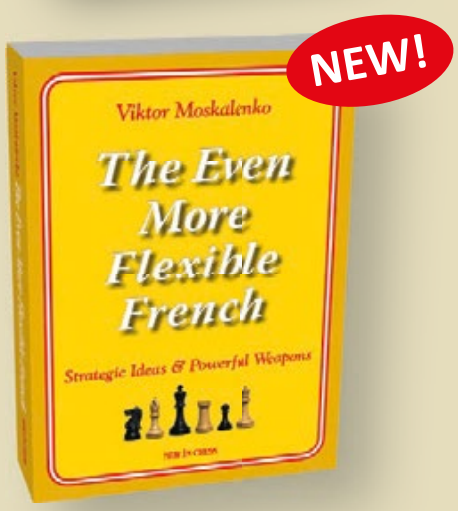
## Taming Wild Chess Openings

*How to deal with the Good, the Bad and the Ugly over the Chess Board*

**John Watson & Eric Schiller** 432 pages - €26.95

Provides club players with solutions to a huge selection of rarely-played or tricky chess openings. The authors concentrate upon ideas and strategy, with enough analysis to satisfy the needs of practical play. They present a simple and safe way to approach the position, requiring little memorization and still leading to a promising game. There is a lot of fun material in this book. Chess isn't all main lines and 20 moves of theory!




## The Even More Flexible French

*Strategic Ideas & Powerful Weapons*

**Viktor Moskalenko** 368 pages - €26.95

When Viktor Moskalenko's *The Flexible French* appeared in 2008, it caused a sensation. It was hailed by reviewers from all over the world as eye-opening, full of new ideas, easy to read, sparkling, and inspirational. Seven years after its publication, Viktor Moskalenko has decided to fully revise, update and extend his modern classic. There are twelve new chapters on lines that have grown in importance, 28 more games, and throughout Moskalenko has found hundreds of improvements, alternatives, new ideas and fresh weapons.

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2015#5
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**COVER**
Veselin Topalov: New In Chess

'I had seen *The Culpepper Cattle Co*, and Browne resembled one of the actors, a rough cowboy.'
*Jan Timman*

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From the Editor

# Bright Side

Veselin Topalov, the winner of Norway Chess, rightly points out that Carlsen's failure also has a bright side, as there are so many other great players that deserve our appreciation (he doesn't mention himself, but don't miss his crystal clear analysis).

Our contributing editor Anish Giri is currently number 6 in the world rankings and continues to write instructive and entertaining game notes. In fact they are small lectures and one of them deals with the famous good knight vs. bad bishop ending.

Yu Yangyi won the 50th Capablanca Memorial, another major Chinese success, and vividly describes his adventures (including being robbed). His brilliant win against Dominguez is a masterclass in attacking the Sicilian.

And Fabiano Caruana is back! With a five-game winning streak the 'born-again' American won Dortmund for the third time. His game against Nisipeanu must be a shock for gambit lovers. So, this is how you detonate the Evans Gambit.

Caruana's verdict on the Evans Gambit is harsh ('I just have to tell how it is'), but there is ample compensation for the romantics among our readers in Jimmy Adams' loving tribute to the art of David Bronstein and his friend, the mysterious 'Queengrabber'.

Caruana's verdict on the Evans Gambit is harsh ('I just have to tell how it is'), but there is ample compensation for the romantics.

A love for the game is probably the best basis to become a better player, but if you're playing club competitions and tournaments, you might like the advice to be a bit more specific. We gladly oblige. Parimarjan Negi shows you that the endgame is mostly about calculating; there's an opening surprise against the Trompowsky and a puzzle section to sharpen your tactical skills.

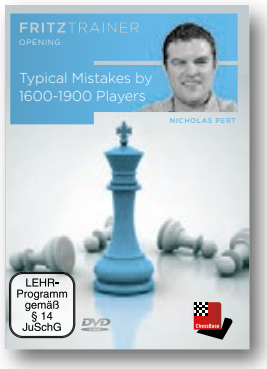
And we have a new column by Arthur van de Oudeweetering, the author of the acclaimed bestseller *Improve Your Chess Pattern Recognition*.

As always, there is a lot more. But that you already knew.

**Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam**
Editor-in-Chief

# NEW!

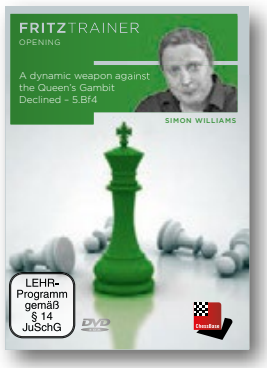
## Nicholas Pert: Typical mistakes by 1600 - 1900 players




In amateur chess gross blunders often decide about win or loss. However, it is surprising that the same or similar mistakes happen again and again. If you want to improve your results you should definitely get to know these typical mistakes - to avoid them yourself and to pounce when your opponents make them! GM Pert has broken the examples into various themes such as “Miscalculating Forcing Lines”, “Being Too Materialistic” and “King Safety” amongst others. Each theme has several examples to demonstrate typical mistakes, and there are various test throughout the DVD.

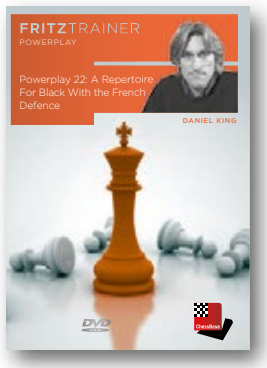
**29,90 €**

## Simon Williams: Dynamic weapon against the QGD - 5.Bf4




The Queens Gambit Declined is a reliable and solid answer to 1.d4. But the systems after 5.Bf4 give White a dynamic and aggressive weapon to play against Black's set-up. White exerts pressure as early as possible and avoids exchanges of minor pieces which often occur 5.Bg5. On the highest level 5.Bf4 is the main move by now, and in the World Championship match 2014 Vishy Anand used it to achieve his only victory against Carlsen. **29,90 €**

## Daniel King: Powerplay 22 – A Repertoire For Black With the French Defence




The French Defence is one of the most reliable openings against 1.e4. The solid central pawn chain protects Black’s king and provides the basis for counter-attacks on both wings. On this DVD Grandmaster Daniel King offers you a repertoire for Black with the French. Based around ten stem games, all White’s major lines against the French are covered. This DVD explores different systems so that you can always keep your opponent guessing as to your choice. Complete games are discussed so that one gains an idea about typical strategies for both sides. More than that, these model games provide inspiration to play the opening. This is an interactive DVD. At key moments in the games Grandmaster King pauses and puts you on the spot. You will have to find and play the best move. He then gives feedback in further video clips according to the move you chose.

**29,90 €**

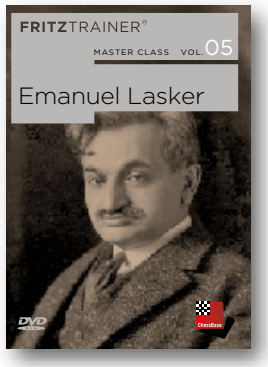
## Nigel Davies: Original and aggressive: 1...b6 for practical players

Spruce up your opening repertoire with an early …b6! Let GM Nigel Davies show you how to transpose into the lines of your choice and how to through your opponent out of his opening book right away!

On this DVD Nigel Davies shows how ...b6 lines can be used to enhance an existing French Defence repertoire (for example with 1.d4 e6 2.c4 b6!?) and provide answers to 1.Nf3 and 1.c4. He also shows how 1...b6 can be used as a defence against 1.e4, for players who want to play for a win and do not mind taking risks.

**29,90 €**

## MasterClass Band 5: Emanuel Lasker




The name Emanuel Lasker will always be linked with his incredible 27 years reign on the throne of world chess. In 1894, at the age of 25, he had already won the world title from Wilhelm Steinitz and his record number of years on the throne did not end till 1921 when Lasker had to accept the superiority of Jose Raul Capablanca. The fascinating question is, how did he manage that? On the ChessBase DVD a team of experts delves deeply into Lasker’s play. In more than 6 hours of video the authors cast light on four important aspects of Lasker’s artistry. Niclas Huschenbeth has looked into Lasker’s openings. Our tactics expert Oliver Reeh challenges you in our interactive format: can you too find Lasker’s brilliant moves? Mihail Marin describes the second world champion as an original strategic player who took his decisions based on the specific features of the position. For Karsten Müller, Lasker was a great pragmatist and a superb defensive player.

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# Havana good time

**The United States and Cuba have had 'frosty' relations ever since Fidel Castro and Che Guevara seized power. Especially, since in the aftermath of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, President John F. Kennedy signed a U.S. trade embargo on all exports into Cuba – famously only after receiving an urgent supply of his own, soon to be illegal, Cuban cigars.**

**Cuba was and remains a chess country. Che himself was instrumental in supporting the game, and it was the chess-loving iconic revolutionary who established the first edition of the Capablanca Memorial in Havana, also in 1962. And like a fine Cuban cigar, it continues to roll along regardless, by celebrating its jubilee 50th edition this year.**

**With the recent first steps to a 'thaw', the U.S. and Cuba look set to re-establish normal relations. While this may be good for everyone, photographers perhaps will not agree. After all, one of Cuba's most distinctive anachronisms – roads full of dilapidated classic cars from the 1950s – looks set to fade into history with new imported vehicles already replacing those oft-photographed rusting dinosaurs. And you could always rely on Cuba to provide a rustic street-scene, such as this one by Spanish photographer José María Mellado – with the thought between the two, we suggest, could be 'We're waiting for tables coming from America.'**

JOSÉ MARÍA MELLADO

## Amazing Grace

It seems as if it is not just World Champion Magnus Carlsen who can get bamboozled by the time-control. A similar fate befell two top Indian women stars, GM Humpy Koneru and IM Tania Sachdev, at the Commonwealth Championship held in Delhi.

In Round 1, Sachdev flagged out on move 41. Now the time-control was clearly written on the website and on the pairing charts in the tournament hall – but what happened was that she had misinterpreted chief arbiter R. Srivatsan's pre-opening round words of 'The time-control is 90 minutes + 30 seconds from move one and 30 minutes' grace time.' This was said all in one sentence, and the confusion was caused by the fact that he never used the phrase 'for the entire game' and the mystery of what in FIDE's name is 'grace time'? As it transpired, '30 minutes' grace time' meant that the organizers did not use the 'zero tolerance' rule, which means an immediate forfeit for not arriving on time, but allowed the participants to be up to 30 minutes late. Listening to the words of the arbiter, you could easily be forgiven for believing that he said 30 minutes would be added at some point, but this was definitely not what he intended to say!

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**Good grace, now it's Humpy Koneru versus the FIDE Ethics Commission.**

As if Sachdev's misfortune in the opening round wasn't enough of a warning for all, in Round 4, the women's world No.2, Humpy Koneru (then on 3/3 – and unaware of what had happened to her fellow-countrywoman) reached a winning position against IM Himanshu Sharma… but she also fell victim to the confusion, opting to take a toilet break at move 44, only to come back to find that her time had run out.

Humpy took her case to the Appeals Committee, not looking to get her point back, but instead wanting an apology and clarification of the confusing announcement. However, no apology or clarification was forthcoming, and although Humpy was obviously upset with how things had happened, she was willing to accept it and move on. But what apparently irritated her was that the arbiter claimed he had done nothing wrong and had essentially called her stupid for not knowing the rules. Feeling she was being unfairly treated now, Humpy promptly withdrew from the tournament, saying she might not play in India again.

In an unprecedented step, the All India Chess Federation (AICF) has now reported Humpy – and these two have some previous history, with no love lost between them – to the FIDE Ethics Commission, seeking 'necessary actions as it deems fit' against their star player. The AICF claim that her actions, conduct and the 'reckless allegations' towards the arbiter and organizers constituted six breaches of the Code of Ethics by the player.

## Leaving Las Vegas

It was with deep sadness that we learned in late June that the indefatigable Walter Shawn Browne had died in his sleep at the age of just 66. Many people who had known Walter will perhaps be wryly smiling to themselves that this is how he would have liked it: leaving us after a week of chess and poker in Las Vegas. As one of his friends remarked to us, this does indeed sound a bit like 'Walter Heaven'.

Walter Browne was often described as 'an American legend', and this is the fitting title chosen by Jan Timman for his tribute in this issue to this colourful and infectious character, who was so packed with nervous energy at the board that it was often said he shook the table he was playing on. He also had a career that spanned over 50 years, each one of which was packed with wonderful games, anecdotes and Walter 'moments'. Everyone, it seems, has a 'Walter story', and we particularly liked the one sent to us from his Bay Area friend, Chris Mavraedis, which captures his insatiable love for the game. Mavraedis's company had sponsored the brilliancy prize for the Pan Pacific Tournament in San Francisco in 1995. Viktor Kortchnoi won the tournament – and at the final dinner, when it was announced that Kortchnoi had also won the brilliancy prize, Walter said loudly, 'I didn't know there was a brilliancy prize. Why wasn't I told?' John Nunn immediately shot back, 'Why? Would you have played more brilliantly?' Walter, without hesitation and completely sincerely, retorted, 'Of course!'

**Feels like home. Walter Browne with Dottie West and Kenny Rogers in Las Vegas in 1979.**

Although Walter had what seemed an insatiable appetite for chess, he was a life-long consummate gamer with an equally insatiable appetite for poker – so much so that he sometimes didn't make it to the tournament hall to play chess. The most memorable occasion was in 2007 in his twilight chess years, when he arrived a few days early for the US National Open in Las Vegas, and opted to sit down to 'play a little poker', as he told us. But he managed to make

three World Poker Tour final tables in three separate variants of the game. He placed third out of 194 in one, seventh out of 1531 in another, and his best was second place out of 382 in the third to pocket a cool $219,060 for his efforts – not a bad payday when you consider that he originally went to Las Vegas to play in the US National Open that had a mere $6,000 first prize on offer!

## Diving in

For various reasons, this is an image that doesn't come to mind automatically: chess players in Speedos. Well, why would it? But the trouble is that this may become a reality. Especially if chess master Etan Ilfeld has anything

**Hold your breath, there comes Etan Ilfeld attacking your pieces.**

to do with it, because he's literally been making a splash in the newspapers with his new invention of Diving Chess.

Yes, apparently Diving Chess is the latest hybrid craze; and not unsurprisingly, Chess Boxing inspired it. Ilfeld, a FIDE-rated player who divides his time between London and Israel, devised Diving Chess after seeing the boxing version in London. 'I thought it was kind of stupid, actually. There's a fighting round and then a round of chess. But it means that someone who is big and strong but not very good at chess could still win. It's either a knockout or a checkmate,' Ilfeld told *The Times of Israel*.

'I thought it would be nice to have some sort of sport version where the body type or the gender didn't matter. So then I had this epiphany about bringing chess into the pool. Regular chess is played with a clock. If you play in a pool, it depends on breath control,' says Ilfeld.

So, as far as we can figure out, this is how Diving Chess works: the waterproof, weighted board and magnetic pieces are at the bottom of the pool, and the players take turns diving down and making their move. They can stay down thinking about a move as long as they can hold their breath.

'You still have to be a good chess player, though,' adds Ilfeld helpfully. 'I think it's exhausting and you have to be able to think under duress. And here, you can never think too long about a move. There's some argument about whether chess is a sport. But Diving Chess is definitely a sport.'

The inaugural 2015 Diving Chess championships will be in London in mid-July, with more events, international and otherwise, already in the pipeline.

## Ono, Yoko Chess!

We've all seen Yoko Ono's famous art installation called 'Play it by Trust', which consists of a chess board with only white squares and pieces. It featured in late husband John Lennon's 1972 video for his solo hit, Imagine. In it, John & Yoko play chess with it. The message behind this conceptual work is fairly straightforward, especially as chess is seen as a metaphor for war, and the artist has a history as a peace activist. With two sides of exactly the same

**Yoko Ono used to play by trust...**

**... but now the artist puts her trust in doggies.**

size, shape and colour, playing a game on the board would quickly devolve into a confusing mess, and finding the winner would be next to impossible.

So we were thrilled to discover that Yoko Ono had released her first iOS app in the Apple Store: Yoko Chess. The first, a standard free game features a 3D chessboard floating in outer space. But there are also two premium boards, available for $2.99 apiece: a 'Doggie' board, where all the pieces are animated dogs (yes, that's right, dogs); and a 'Play it by Trust' board, based on her art installation from 1966.

The Doggie board sees the pieces being replaced with animated dogs of differing breeds: the pawns are Dachshunds, rooks are Labradors, bishops are Pinschers and the knights are Bulldogs. A Dalmatian plays the queen and an Alsatian is the king. In addition, each dog lets out a cute little bark with every move – and no, as one Café regular has already suggested, the favourite opening played on it is not the Collie!

For every purchase of the doggie board, 20% is donated to an animal rescue organization 'where possible, within the territory of the player.'

## Simultaneous Supergran

As the signature tune of the 1980s UK kids' TV show Supergran used to go, 'Stand back Superman, Iceman, Spiderman. Batman and Robin too…' And with that, here comes our very own Supergran – as the press dubbed her – 87-year-old Hungarian pensioner Brigetta Sinka, who after decades spent play-

ing simultaneous chess, claims to have clinched a world record recently by finally overtaking the total set by former World Champion, José Raul Capablanca from Cuba.

Almost 60 years since her first simultaneous game, Sinka overtook the magic 13,545 number attributed to Capa. 'I wanted to stop for a moment so everyone could reflect in memory of Capablanca,' said Sinka, a former top amateur, to the assembled press in

**No, not Yoko's Doggie Chess - it's 'Supergran' Brigetta Sinka in record-breaking simultaneous action.**

a packed tent in a Budapest park in late June, when she broke the record.

Since the 1950s, Sinka has clocked up thousands of simultaneous games around Hungary, playing at summer camps for schoolchildren hosted by her employer of many decades. In 2010, with her total around 9,000 games – all meticulously recorded, including where, when and which opponent, and all signed off by a witness – a chess historian told her that he had spotted Capablanca's total in Edward Winter's behemoth biography of the Cuban great. 'I had been unaware of it before then, so I thought I'd have a go at beating it,' said Sinka.

She now hopes the Guinness World Records adjudicators will acknowledge her feat as an official world record. But Sinka, who has undergone three heart operations in recent years, isn't going to rest on her laurels; she's already committed to playing in several school camps throughout the rest of the summer.

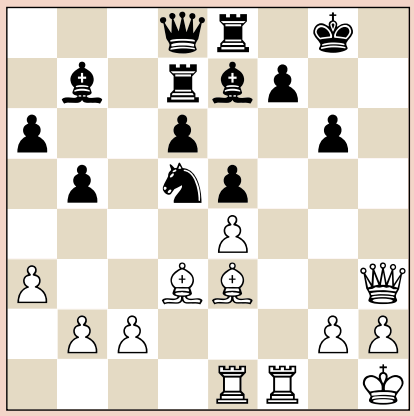
## Masterpiece Creator

Some games from the past enjoy the reputation of being the best of their time or the most brilliant by a particular master of his generation – and many of these famous games from the annals have been given their own names, most notably 19th-century games with flowery and romantic titles such as the 'Evergreen' or the 'Immortal'. In 1923, Aaron Nimzowitsch created the 'Immortal Zugzwang' by paralysing his opponent; and who can forget Bobby Fischer, at the age of 13, spectacularly sacrificing his queen against Donald Byrne, earning that game the sobriquet of 'Game of the Century'?

So what name should we give to the brilliancy that 16-year-old Wei Yi of China created at the 6th Hainan Danzhou GM tournament? We've already had heated discussions here at the Café and perhaps we should ask you, our readers, to come up with suggestions. The best ones will be published. Here's the masterpiece that should inspire you.

**Wei Yi**
**Lazaro Bruzon**
Danzhou 2015

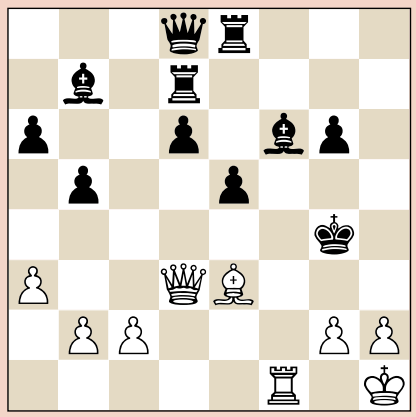
**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.♘c3 a6 4.♗e2 ♘c6 5.d4 cxd4 6.♘xd4 ♕c7 7.0-0 ♘f6 8.♗e3 ♗e7 9.f4 d6 10.♔h1 0-0 11.♕e1 ♘xd4 12.♗xd4 b5 13.♕g3 ♗b7 14.a3 ♖ad8 15.♖ae1 ♖d7 16.♗d3 ♕d8 17.♕h3 g6 18.f5 e5 19.♗e3 ♖e8 20.fxg6 hxg6 21.♘d5 ♘xd5?**



The alternative 21...♗xd5 would have been the lesser of two evils, but White still would have the advantage. But this does allow... **22.♖xf7!!** A wonderful rook sacrifice from the young Wei Yi, as he drags his opponent's king up the board to its slaughter. Whatever are they feeding these Chinese prodigies, raw meat? **22...♔xf7 23.♕h7+ ♔e6 24.exd5+ ♔xd5** The alternative would also lose: 24...♗xd5 25.♗xg6 (threatening ♕f7+ or ♕h3+, both mating) 25...♗xg2+ 26.♔xg2 d5 27.♕f7+ ♔d6 28.♕xe8, easily winning. **25.♗e4+! ♔xe4 26.♕f7!?**

**Brilliant Wei Yi: You name it.**

A very human response – but only here could the cold calculating calmness of silicon demand a mate-in-eight with 26.c4!. **26...♗f6 27.♗d2+ ♔d4 28.♗e3+ ♔e4 29.♕b3! ♔f5 30.♖f1+ ♔g4 31.♕d3!**



Now the dual threat is ♕xg6 and ♕e2, mating. **31...♗xg2+** If 31...♖g7 32.♕e2+ ♔h4 there now comes the deadly quiet move 33.h3!, the idea not only being ♕g4, mate, but also ♔h2 and g3, mate. **32.♔xg2 ♕a8+ 33.♔g1 ♗g5 34.♕e2+ ♔h4 35.♗f2+ ♔h3 36.♗e1** Now there's no way to stop ♖f3, mating. 1-0. A truly wonderful masterpiece. ■

## Becoming a U.S. citizen

Although the interview with Wesley So in New In Chess 2015/4 states that he is a U.S. citizen, this is not true. If he got his green card in 2014, he could not ordinarily become a citizen before 2019. If he married Abbey (assuming she is a U.S. citizen) or some other U.S. citizen, he could qualify in 3 years. Ironically, I was slated to interview Maurice Ashley last October on his application to become a citizen and had to trade him off to a colleague since I'm not permitted to handle the case of a person I know.

Edward Frumkin
New York, NY, USA

## Men and women

First, love the magazine and look forward to each issue. But I feel that you are digging yourselves into a hole you can't climb out of regarding the women in chess debate.

The chart and narrative related to the persistent gap between men and women on page 11 of New In Chess 2015/4 is misleading. The narrative claims that 'Short based his conclusions in part on the fact that while there have been two women (Judit Polgar and Hou Yifan) who have been able to break into the ranks of the top players, women, in general, have made little progress overtaking men. The first graph below illustrates this point.' However, the narrative fails to point out that comparing the average rating of the top 20 players from any arbitrary population to the top 20 players in the world is going to illustrate a rating gap unless that population is 'the top 20 players in the world.' A similar graph could be constructed for any population of chess players.

For example, the average rating of the top 20 Norwegian players is 2506 according to the FIDE ratings list, or 266 points below the average for the top 20 players. Does this mean that Norwegians are 'not able to play chess as well as' the rest of the world and that World Champion Magnus Carlsen is the exception that proves the rule just as Judit Polgar is the exception that proves the rule for women? Similarly, the average rating of the top 20 from India is merely 2569 despite producing the previous World Champion.

Matthew P. Tedesco
Seattle, WA, USA

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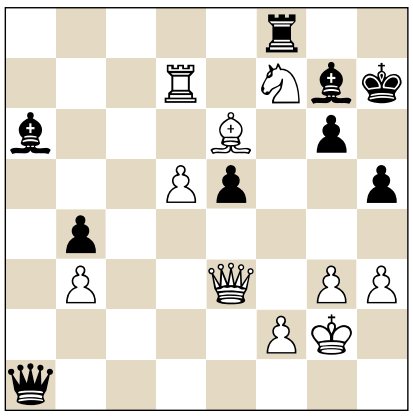
## A second solution

In New In Chess 2015/4, on page 61 ('Maximize your Tactics') the first puzzle actually has two solutions; the one you published, and also:



**1.♕h6+ ♗xh6 2.♘xe5+♔h8 3.♘xg6** Mate.

James Arnold
Richmond Hill, Canada

## Editorial postscript:

Beautiful indeed, but 2...♗g7 spoils the fun...

## Fearing for Brooklyn

Hans Ree's observations in New In Chess 2015/3 are well-taken: Garry Kasparov's rose-coloured view of U.S. geopolitics needs to mature. Since he now appears to live in the U.S. and even gave a fine commencement speech recently at St. Louis University ('Always listen to your mother!') we expect more from him.

I write to quarrel with Ree's calling the 2014 Maidan Revolution in Ukraine a 'coup'. The term implies a narrow conspiracy: '(Coup d'état), also known simply as a coup, or an overthrow, is the sudden and forced seizure of a state, usually instigated by a small group of the existing government establishment to depose the established regime and replace it with a new ruling body (Wikipedia).

No, even the diabolical CIA could not mobilize 800,000 Ukrainians into the streets to demand the ouster of a kleptocrat, who soon ran away to his friends in Russia. Ukraine today is battling foreign aggression. The 'fascist coup' line is purveyed by the agents, witting or not, of the Putinform. Chief of those in the U.S. is Professor Stephen Cohen.

One actually fears for Brooklyn, as Putin assumes the right to intervene in any place where there are Russian-speakers.

I have written a lauded book on the Soviet Union. See www.1983thenovel.com

Anthony Saidy
Los Angeles, CA, USA

**COLOPHON**

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**ART-DIRECTION:** Jan Scholtus
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**SALES AND ADVERTISING:** Remmelt Otten

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Was Magnus Carlsen, on his third attempt, finally going to put Norway Chess under his belt? Far from it. Unaware of the new time-control, the World Champion suffered a dramatic loss on time in the first round and never recovered. Gifted with an unexpected point, Veselin Topalov (40) shook off his initial insecurity and before he knew it, the carefree Bulgarian had won the $75,000 first prize and climbed back to shared second place in the world rankings – together with Vishy Anand (45), the runner-up in the first leg of the Grand Chess Tour, who continues to amaze us.

# No Country for Young Men

**Simen Agdestein**

Do you remember Bob Dylan's song *Who killed Davey Moore? (Why an' what's the reason for?)* about the American featherweight world champion who died from inoperable brain damage after a boxing fight in 1963? Dylan was angered that everyone involved in the bout claimed they were not to be blamed and he put his anger in a song that he didn't record officially but played at many concerts. One stanza started 'Not I,' says the referee, 'Don' t point your finger at me.' And another: 'Not me,' says his manager, Puffing on a big cigar. And then: 'Not me,' says the man whose fists, laid him low in a cloud of mist. And there were a couple more suspects that Dylan included.

**Magnus Carlsen and Veselin Topalov arrive at the Utstein Monastery, where Round 4 was played. The World Champion would suffer his third loss, against Vishy Anand. The Bulgarian would win his third game, against Levon Aronian.**

So, whose fault was it that Magnus Carlsen didn't know the rules and lost on time in a winning position against Veselin Topalov in the first round of the third Norway Chess? His loss had a considerable impact on the further course of the tournament. In his trademark manner, the World Champion had managed to squeeze the maximum out of a microscopic advantage. Move 60 was approaching and Magnus had spent a bit more time than usual, but there should be no reason to worry, we thought in the *TV2* television studio in the Scandic Forus hotel in Stavanger.

*TV2* had secured the rights to show the tournament on their sports channel after a tough battle with public channel *NRK* and *VGTV*, the biggest newspaper that has also shown a lot of Magnus chess on their Internet site. It's good business for them, they say. Most sports have to pay to get on TV in Norway, but somehow chess has secured a negotiating position. Chess and football. As far as I could tell, Norway Chess was another economic success for *TV2*. At least they were very happy and I should know, since I was sitting in their studio for almost all the games. How nice that wasn't! Rather than playing I was substituting for Jon Ludvig Hammer, who has become immensely popular as a TV chess commentator. Everybody loves him! Especially the playoff between Magnus Carlsen and Arkadij Naiditsch close to midnight at the end of the Baden-Baden tournament last February was great TV, as a big TV audience discovered what fun time-trouble can be, especially with Jon Ludvig as a commentator.

Of course, Magnus is the main reason for the enormous chess interest in Norway, but Jon Ludvig and the even more eccentric Hans Olav Lahlum have also become popular TV faces. In fact, *TV2* have signed both of them up for all Magnus's tournaments this year.

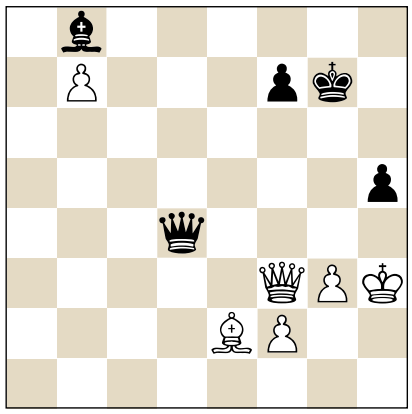
But this time, 'the Norwegian people' had to do with me, since Jon Ludvig had won the qualification tournament for the wildcard spot.

In his Norway Chess debut in 2013, Jon Ludvig was totally overwhelmed by the strength of the event and got only 1½ points. This time he collected three, and it could and should have been more. But he didn't make a fool of himself and at least he beat his old school mate, the World Champion.

Last year I assembled 3½ points (and it could and should have been

more – ed.) and the audience was shocked because they had no idea I could also play chess. Lately I've become more famous for silly things like dancing on TV and things not so silly, like training Magnus Carlsen. However, it is a much more pleasant experience following all the games and talking about the chess world than combatting the very best over the chess board.

But let's return to the game between Magnus Carlsen and Veselin Topalov. After almost seven hours in the studio we were looking at the following position in this fateful game.



**Carlsen-Topalov**
Stavanger 2015 (1)
position after 56... ♗b8

Magnus had about 15 minutes left. We weren't quite sure what the time-control was. We couldn't find it on the tournament website. But they had had a 30-second increment per move from move 40 onwards, so there shouldn't be anything to worry about, we believed. First we thought 57.♕xh5 was just winning. The opposite-coloured bishop ending should be simple enough, and wasn't the forced 57...♕xf2 58.♕g5+ ♔f8 59.♕d8+ ♔g7 60.♕xb8 ♕xe2 61.♕f4 also easily winning then? Magnus was thinking and thinking. And then we also thought a bit further, and actually it isn't all over after 61...♕h5+ 62.♕h4 ♕b5. But still, it should be winning. Magnus found it easier to send the bishop to b3. **57.♗d1 f5!** A very good try in a desperate situation and possible since the queen is overloaded by the protection of the bishop on d1.

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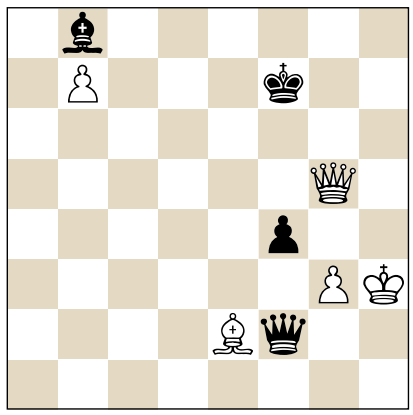
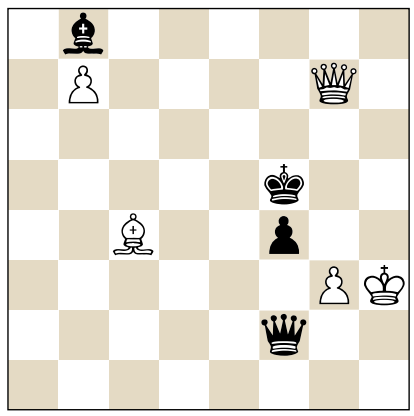
**The *TV2* studio minutes before they go on air. Anchor Fin Gratt looks over Hans Olav Lahlum's shoulder. In the middle Simen Agdestein, on the far right an assistant adds the final touches to Kaja Marie Snare.**

**58.♗e2!** Magnus keeps a cool head. After 58.♗b3 Black has 58...♕g4+. **58...f4** 58...♕g4+ can now be met by 59.♕xg4+ hxg4+ 60.♗xg4!, and the three pawns will outplay the bishop. **59.♕xh5 ♕xf2?!** The computer only needed a fraction of a second to see that this was bad. Topalov thought he had saved himself. From a human perspective it's not that obvious that this is not so. **60.♕g5+ ♔f7**



Magnus's manager, my brother actually, was also in the studio, and suddenly we became very uncertain whether Magnus knew that he wouldn't get 15 extra minutes on the clock after move 60, which has been normal in most tournaments. The clock was ticking down to zero and Magnus was checking his score-sheet to see if he'd made 60 moves. He had, and he thought he should wait for the extra time to appear before he decided where to check. However, no extra time appeared. Was it possible? Magnus had lost on time! We couldn't believe our eyes. The win is not elementary, but Magnus didn't need many seconds in the studio afterwards to see the point of a long line that would run approximately like this: 61.♗c4+ ♔e8 62.♗b5+ ♔f7 63.♕d5+ ♔g7 64.♕d7+ ♔f6 65.♕d8+ ♔g6 66.♗d3+ ♔f7 67.♗c4+ ♔g6 68.♕e8+ ♔g5 69.♕e7+ ♔h6 70.♕f8+ ♔g5 71.♕g7+ ♔f5



72.g4+! This is the point that Black cannot avoid. 72...♔e4 73.♕g6+ ♔e3 74.♕d3 is mate, and 73...♔e5 74.♕e6+ ♔d4 75.♕b6+ loses the queen. Magnus clearly would have seen this, but the arbiter had no choice but to proclaim the result.

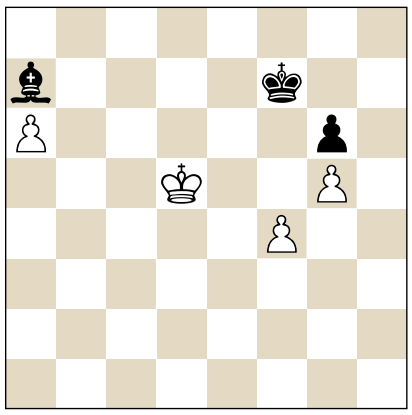
Whose fault was it? The chief arbiter, Sava Stoisavljevic, had informed the players about the time rate before the start of the round, but Magnus appeared only seconds before his game was to begin. He simply wasn't there when she made the announcement. Should the arbiter specifically have gone to Magnus to inform him? Hans Olav, who also is an experienced international arbiter, thought not. 'She did nothing wrong', he said.

How about the manager? Is he responsible for such things? No, says he. 'Normally they inform the players during a players' meeting before the tournament.' When a completely new time-control like this is implemented, the organizer should make sure the message reaches the players, he said.

In the end, the organizers apologized publicly. Perhaps just to please the World Champion, who is, after all, the main reason why the tournament is possible.

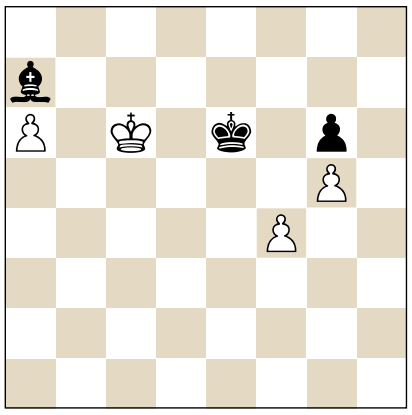
Magnus was understandably very upset. 'Someone hasn't done their job,' he said. But he was also very clear on taking the responsibility on his own shoulders.

Anyway, this was a fantastic boost for Topalov. Some rounds later he received another Norwegian gift.



**Hammer-Topalov**
Stavanger 2015 (5)
position after 73.♔d5

It's been a very fierce and long battle and it's unclear who's been playing for a win, but now the draw is obvious. After 73...♗b8 74.♔c6 Black would better return with the bishop, and it's a repetition. Topalov was ready to finish the game and sign the score sheet and played: **73...♔e7** Of course, now 74.f5 gxf5 is a handshake right away, but what was Jon Ludvig doing? **74.♔c6??** Oh no! 'I wasn't thinking,' was his only explanation. **74...♔e6**



Here, in total devastation, it dawned to Jon Ludvig what he had done. White will be far too late to stop the Black g-pawn.

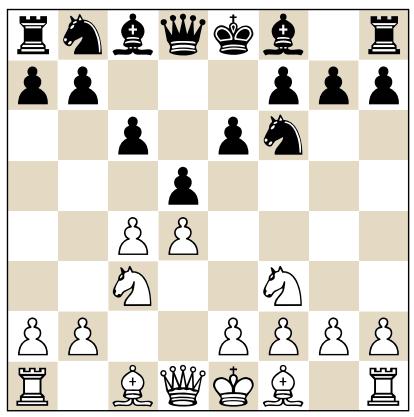
Topalov won the tournament with the great score of 6½ out of 9, but this didn't mean that he played that great. The following game, however, was very convincing.

NOTES BY
**Veselin Topalov**

SL 9.4 – D48
**Maxime Vachier-Lagrave**
**Veselin Topalov**
Stavanger 2015 (3)

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 c6**

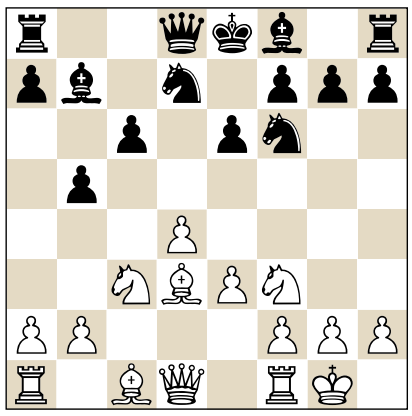
I decided to go for the Meran with this move order. Against Magnus we got there immediately with 1.d4 d5.



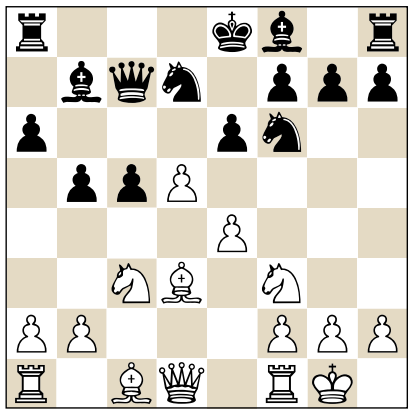
**5.e3** Magnus went 5.♗g5, which is a completely different story.

MAGNUS CARLSEN'S STRATEGY TO WIN
NORWAY CHESS 2016
NORWEGIAN WILL BE THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE, NO OPENING THEORY, AND ONLY I WILL KNOW THE TIME-CONTROL!
ARBITER
VONK
BEREND VONK

**5...♘bd7 6.♗d3** Maxime had various games in the line 6.♕c2 ♗d6 7.♗d3, which is now known to be rather drawish. These games showed he had no big ideas to get an advantage with White against the Meran.
**6...dxc4 7.♗xc4 b5 8.♗d3 ♗b7 9.0-0**



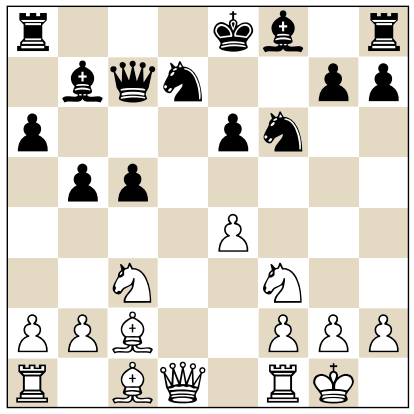
**9...a6** There are two other moves here: 9...♗d6 and 9...b4 immediately, which is playing for a draw. The text-move is sharper, and forces White's follow-up.
**10.e4 c5 11.d5 ♕c7**



**12.dxe6** Slightly under 10 years ago, Paco Vallejo gave me a file on this line which was already quite complete. So I knew what was going on. In general Black is OK. Taking on e6 first is more precise than first playing 12.♗c2, as in that case Black has an extra option, since he can castle queenside immediately.

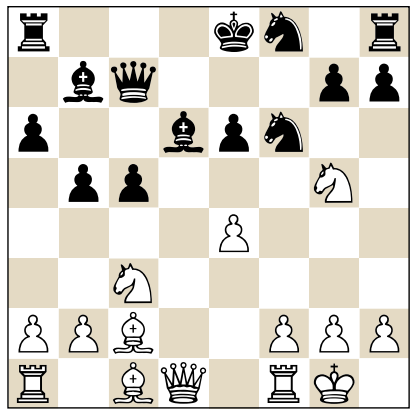
> 'Perhaps Vachier-Lagrave hoped that I would not be prepared. But I knew this move and knew how to react.'

**12...fxe6 13.♗c2**

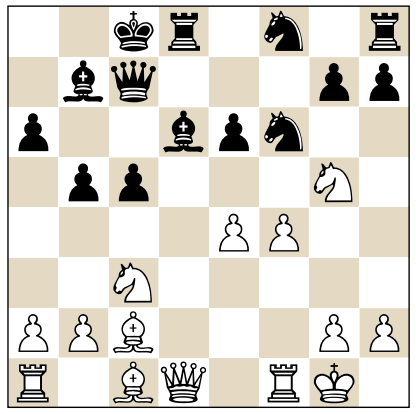


**13...♗d6** Again there was a crossroads and both the text-move, 13...♗d6, and 13...c4, after which the new trend is 14.♘e2, are playable. The move I chose has a good reputation, but also a lot of theory. The next few moves are more or less forced.

**14.♘g5 ♘f8**



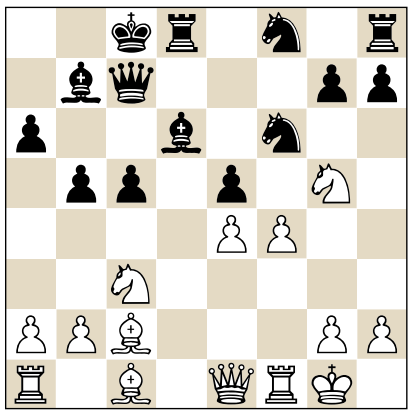
**15.f4** This is the main move. Less good is 15.♕f3 h6 16.♕h3, as Black need not worry about the e6-pawn here: 16...0-0-0 17.♘xe6 ♘xe6 18.♕xe6+ ♔b8, and Black will recover the pawn and be fine.
**15...0-0-0**



**16.♕e1**
This move is less common and perhaps Vachier-Lagrave hoped that I would not be prepared. But I knew this move and knew how to react. Far more popular is 16.♕e2, when 16...e5 is not so good: 17.a4 b4 18.♘d5, and now the pawn on a6 is hanging if you take on d5 twice. Black

has to play 16...h6 17.♘f3 ♗xf4 18.e5 ♗xf3 19.♕xf3 ♗xe5 20.♕a8+, and this should lead to equality, as many games have shown.

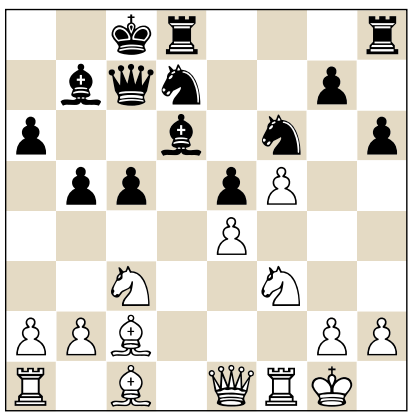
**16...e5**



**17.f5** This move I don't like. Black's position is already strategically sound, and only my king is a bit exposed. In case of 17.fxe5 ♗xe5 18.♘f3 I will leave the bishop on e5, and after 18...♘e6 19.♘xe5 ♕xe5 20.♖f5 ♕c7 my knight will jump to d4, followed by ...♖he8, with excellent play for Black.

Of course, the main move is 17.♘d5, when after 17...♗xd5 18.exd5 exf4 the position is approximately equal. It looks dangerous for Black, but he is a pawn up for the moment and the white bishop on c1 is temporarily locked in.

**17...h6 18.♘f3 ♘8d7**

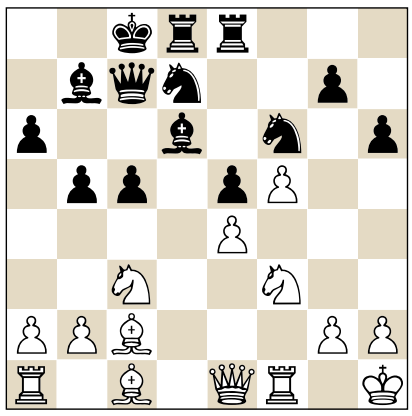


All this had also been seen in a game Illescas-Shirov (in a man+computer match in Leon in 2000). I liked this position. Black is strategically fine. My king is a bit exposed, but all my pieces are doing great. White has a very serious weakness on e4 and will eventually lose a pawn, and then the question will be if he has enough counterplay or not.

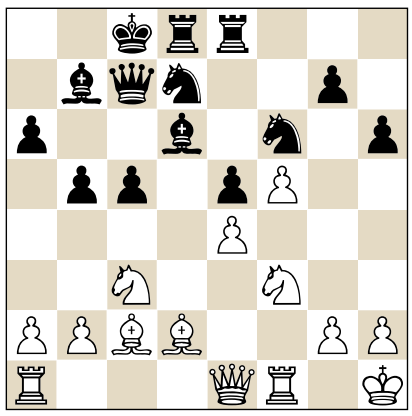
**19.♔h1**

A useful move, sidestepping any checks from c5 after Black has played ...c4, and also preparing ♗e3-g1.

**19...♖he8**



Or 19...♕c6, in order to play ...b4 next. **20.♗d2**



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**Veselin Topalov and his friend and manager Silvio Danailov check the pairings of the day in the Valhala room in the Scandic Forus hotel.**

**20...♕c6**

After 20...c4 White has the very strong 21.b4! ♗xb4 22.a4, when Black may still be OK, but this was not what I was aiming for.

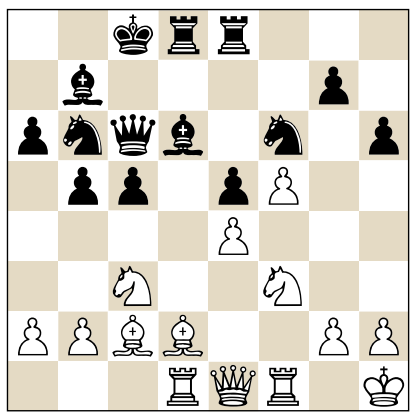
If I start with 20...♘b6, White could try to regroup with 21.♘d1, put the knight on f2 and start play on the queenside.

**21.♖d1**

Maybe 21.♖c1 was better.

**21...♘b6**

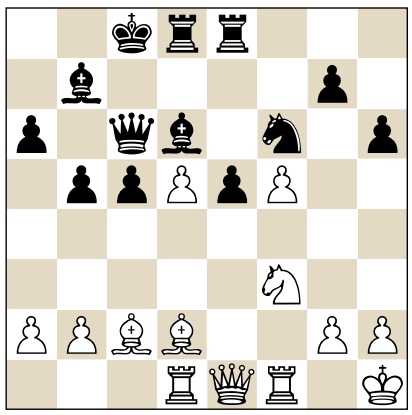
Now ...b4 is becoming a threat.



**22.♘d5?**

An incredible move; sheer panic. I had expected him to go 22.♗e3 and then give a pawn after 22...b4 with 23.♘d5, when Black is also absolutely fine, but it would be better for White than what happened in the game.

**22...♘bxd5 23.exd5**



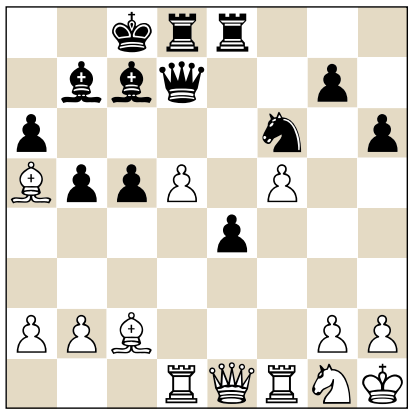
**23...♕d7**

The strongest reply. I am not in a rush to take the pawn on d5 and intend to push ...e4. Black has a huge advantage and the game will soon be over. Even 23...♕xd5 24.♗a5 ♕c6 25.♗xd8 ♖xd8 would give Black excellent compensation for the exchange.

And 23...♘xd5 24.♗e4 ♗c7 was also possible, since White has no way to exploit the pin and on the next move I will step out of the pin and just be a pawn up.

**24.♗a5 e4 25.♘g1 ♗c7**

I could probably even have given the exchange, but why should I?



**26.d6**

This amounts to resigning.

26.♘e2 doesn't really change much: 26...♗xa5 27.♕xa5 ♕c7 28.♕xc7+ ♔xc7 29.♘f4 ♗xd5, with a hopeless endgame for White.

**26...♗xa5 27.♕xa5 e3 28.♘e2 ♕c6**

White resigned.

I didn't have to do much. Even the lines I had to calculate were few enough.

■ ■ ■

Topalov's loss in Round 8 against Anish Giri brought back a bit of tension, as the Bulgarian's lead over Anand was reduced to half a point. Moreover, he faced Anand in that last game, but with the comfort of the white pieces. Topalov made no secret of his ambitions, and when he got the chance, he went for an early move repetition that was also seen in Ivanchuk-Carlsen earlier this year in Wijk aan Zee (where it effectively put an end to a six-game winning streak of the World Champion) and claimed the first leg of the Grand Chess Tour. This year the Tour will consist of three tournaments. The second leg is the Sinquefield Cup in Saint Louis in August, the third leg is the London Chess Classic in December.

> 'With his typically sober attitude the Bulgarian didn't get overly excited. "We're only chess players. It's much more responsibility being a bus driver,' he said.

The final rankings in the Grand Chess Tour will decide on the division of a separate prize-fund with a $75,000 first prize, just as in the individual tournaments. For the 2016 Tour the organizers hope to add a fourth event, in Jakarta in February.

With his great start in the 2015 Tour, 40-year-old Topalov rose to shared second place (with Anand) in the world rankings. With his typically sober attitude the Bulgarian didn't get overly excited. 'We're only chess players. It's much more responsibility being a bus driver,' he said.

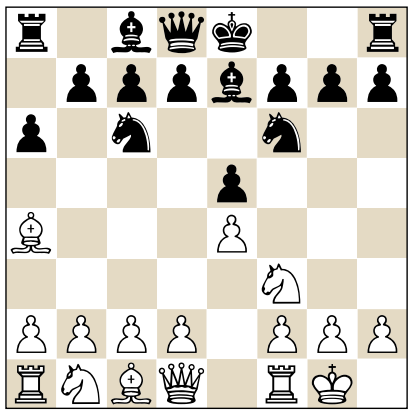
Vishy Anand already has an extra five years on his back. At the age of 45, the Indian ex-World Champion seems impressively fit. He sticks to his style and doesn't waste energy on either socializing in the bar or trying to fulfil the expectations of a very demanding home press. Getting his revenge against Magnus must have been a highly welcome boost for his confidence in case another World Championship match should come up.

RL 25.16 – C84
**Vishy Anand**
**Magnus Carlsen**
Stavanger 2015 (4)

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6**

No more Berlin. Magnus lost badly to Caruana with this some rounds earlier. Unpredictability has been one of Magnus' strengths throughout his career, and perhaps it's wise to return to that strategy. I guess the Berlin is still floating, but Magnus needs new water to swim in.

**4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7**



**6.d3**

In the Gashimov Memorial just a couple of months before, Anand presumed that Magnus wouldn't play the Marshall (6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 0-0 8.c3 d5), but that's exactly what he did. Magnus had never played that opening before and normally avoids long theoretical debates, but he's a fast learner and now, when he's shown that he can throw out 8…d5, White's choices become a bit more limited.

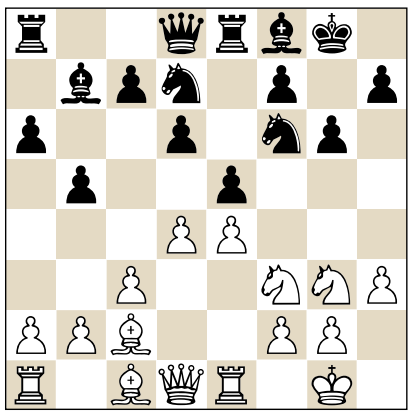
**6...d6**

Aronian played the more normal 6... b5 against Magnus some rounds later, and had no problems after 7.♗b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.♖e1 ♘a5 10.♗c2 c5, with a classical Chigorin setup, only with a rather modest white d-pawn. White, however, has the alternative 8.a4, or even 8.a3, which was one of Mikhail Tal's many ideas, if I've understood correctly, when seconding Anatoly Karpov in his matches against Viktor Kortchnoi.

**7.c3 0-0 8.♘bd2 ♖e8 9.♖e1 b5 10.♗c2**

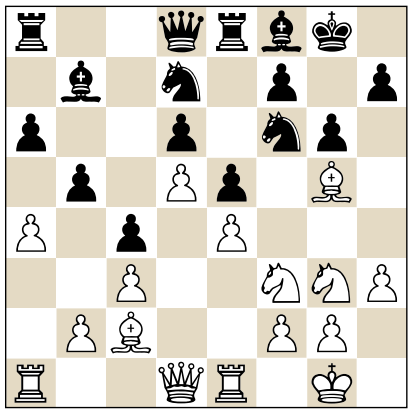
Anand exploits the delayed b-pawn push. 10.♗b3 would be Carlsen-Aronian.

**10...♗f8 11.♘f1 g6 12.h3 ♗b7 13.♘g3 ♘b8 14.d4 ♘bd7**



By transposition the game has ended up in a normal Breyer-line. White has wasted a move with his d-pawn, but has saved one with his bishop.

**15.a4 c5 16.d5 c4 17.♗g5**



**17...♗g7**

17...h6 is the normal move here, but lately strong players like Giri and Vachier-Lagrave have played the black position without it. They left the bishop on f8 for a while, keeping the option of returning it to e7 open. I don't know Magnus' reasoning, but it's a crucial phase and it seems strange to allow Anand to proceed with his plan undisturbed.

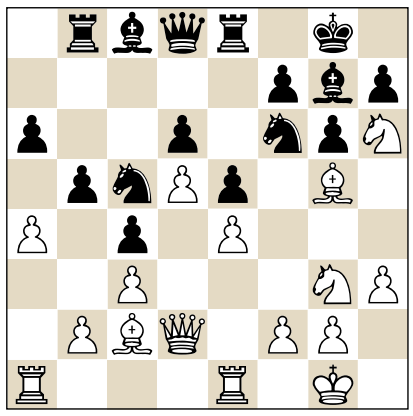
**18.♕d2 ♖b8 19.♘h2**

A standard procedure.

**19...♗c8 20.♘g4**

The two other top players I've referred to kind of half-managed to avoid this knight jump.

**20...♘c5 21.♘h6+**

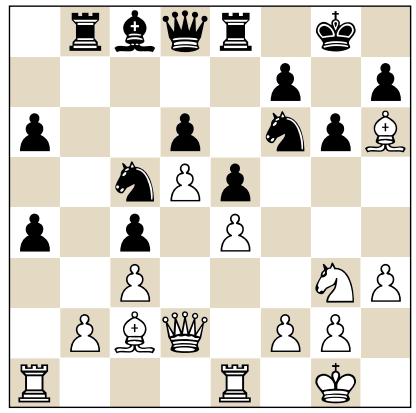


I've also experienced a knight like this against Anand, in the World Junior Championship in Baguio in the Philippines in 1987. The knight was a thorn in my side and Anand went on to beat me and then to win the whole thing to become World Junior Champion.

**21...♗xh6**

Magnus at least had the chance to kill the knight, but it's hard to understand that he went for this voluntarily.

**22.♗xh6 bxa4**



**23.♖a2**

Anand's handling of the queenside is interesting. He could have thrown in an exchange on b5, but he didn't, estimating that Black's counterplay is slower this way. It's wonderful to have the great masters to show us such things.

**23...a3**

Magnus's play is also interesting.

**24.bxa3 ♘fd7 25.f4 a5 26.♖f1 f6 27.f5**

**continued on page 25**

NEW IN CHESS

**Vishy Anand and Magnus Carlsen thank the young guest of the day for making the first move of a game that would reflect the form of both players.**

# ‘The younger guys not only have the energy, but also the illusion and the motivation’

A plus-one score was the modest ambition that Veselin Topalov expressed at the start of Norway Chess. Too modest, as it turned out. Of course the Bulgarian was pleased that he won the tournament, but he didn’t get overly excited. These days he has an almost Buddhist attitude towards life, he tells **Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam**.

‘I had to be objective after not playing for some months. These guys are playing all the time and working a lot more than I do. I couldn’t understand why I should score more than them. You have Magnus, who is always the favourite, and there are several guys who are in great shape. Theoretically anyone can win, but I could not see it happen. In the first rounds I was not so confident, even when I got this point against Magnus, I was very upset with my play. The way I played it would only be a matter of time to lose games and to end up with a minus score. The next game, against Hikaru, I drew, but I almost lost it in one move. After two rounds my result was very good, but my play was very shaky. Then I played three very good games against Vachier, Levon, and Grischuk, which I all won. And in-between I got a present from Hammer.’

*Everyone kept talking about this first game for the rest of the tournament. Did you quickly forget about it?*
‘I didn’t think it was so important. It was too early to draw conclusions. I was disappointed by my play, but in fact it was normal after having been inactive for several months. I got a completely normal position and then Magnus outplayed me from an equal to a lost position.’

*When his clock was ticking down, were you aware of what was going to happen?*
‘No. At some point I was going to resign, but then he played bishop d1 and I got small chances. In the final position, I was still lost but I created some counter-threats. He was still winning, but he was short of time. He had many checks, but I thought that it was the best position I had had for a long time. And I was not watching the clock.’

*Did you know the time-control?*
‘I knew because before the round I heard what Sava (Stoisavljevic, the chief arbiter – DJtG) said and it sounded a bit weird to me, the time-control. So during the game I asked her.’

*You had a very relaxed attitude. In the evening you didn’t even check who you were playing the next day.*
‘Normally I do check who I play the next day, but this time I was not going to work too much in the morning before the round. Certain openings you can never refute. I had several small ideas that I wanted to try and that was more or less it. I only refreshed my memory in some lines if I was Black. In the morning, after breakfast, I would prepare or refresh for about an hour or even less sometimes. Then a little walk, some coffee, lunch…’

**First you beat them, then you make them laugh. (Left to right) Veselin Topalov, Vishy Anand, Hikaru Nakamura, Anish Giri, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, Magnus Carlsen, Alexander Grischuk, Levon Aronian and Jon Ludvig Hammer.**

*Did you sleep before the game?*
'Yeah, yeah. Not sleeping really, but just lying down. Lunch was over at half past one and then from that time till the start of the round at four, I would lie down. It's not really sleeping, it's not like a Spanish siesta, just relaxing, closing your eyes and relaxing. I think it's a good way to concentrate, a bit like meditating.'

*Your attitude in general has become more and more Buddhist…*
'Absolutely (laughs). Like total Nirvana. There are so many wars; planes are falling from the sky, so why should I really care about some game? The worst that could happen to me here was last place. OK, that's 15,000 dollars. I mean, is it that bad? Why should I worry? Really. That's my attitude recently. That my family is healthy, that I am healthy, that is my priority. The rest is much less important.'

'The worst that could happen to me here was last place. OK, that's 15,000 dollars. I mean, is it that bad?'

*That is also because you don't have material worries?*
'That is also subjective. If you really want you can always ask for more. This year I play Gibraltar, three events for the Grand Chess Tour, the World Cup, Skopje (the European Club Cup – DJtG), and maybe something else. That's enough for me.'

*You have a very practical attitude towards the world championship cycle. You calculate the financial risk you are taking by comparing the investments you make by hiring seconds and having training camps, and the money that can be made.*
'If you win the Candidates' tournament it's great, of course, but if you finish somewhere in the middle it's nothing special. I believe that if you prepare properly, you should have more decent chances than when you don't prepare. But it didn't work for me that way the last time in Khanty-Mansiysk, where I played really badly. And then I was going to the Olympiad in Tromsø and to Saint Louis without any preparation, and

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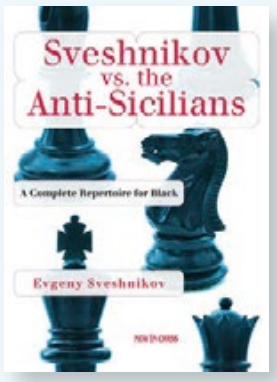


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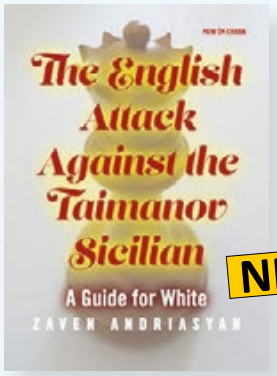


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I did much better than at the Candidates'. But even winning the Candidates' doesn't mean automatically that you will play a match. You can ask Kasparov or Shirov. And if you play against Magnus, I believe only some guys that are younger have a chance. Theoretically speaking, the older generation can win, but practically the probability is not that high. A match requires a lot of effort that is not only physical but also mental. The age difference is very important. I think these younger guys like Giri, Caruana, Wei Yi, they not only have the energy but also the illusion and the motivation. Which makes you immediately play better. With a family it's different.'

*So for you the old system in which you find financial backers and challenge the World Champion wouldn't be so bad.*
'Yeah, maybe (laughs). I don't think it was that bad. You can criticize it, but you already have this in the Candidates' tournament. They have one spot for the organizer. That is what happened with Baku sponsoring the London Candidates', when the place went to Radjabov. And a Russian player in Khanty. They always keep one place for those who pay.'

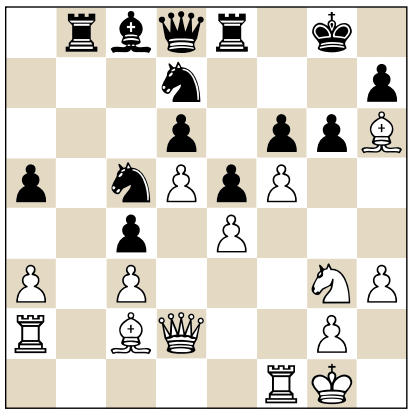
*You will probably qualify by rating…*
'That's what it looks like. Still many tournaments to go, but I look like a big favourite to qualify. But once again, it's not something… The probability that I will play is higher than that I won't, but it's not 100 per cent. First they will have to send out contracts and of course this AGON (the company that holds the rights to the World Championship – DJtG) is a joke. A company that has no employees, come on. That's not serious. After 20 years of Kirsan's rule the value of the rights (to organize the world championship) was one pound (laughs). That's what they claim AGON was sold for. I don't think these guys are really developing chess and finding sponsors.'

*And for you that's all fine, as long as you have some tournaments…*
'Yeah, exactly, such as the Grand Chess Tour, three fantastic tournaments. There may be more in the future. If it grows, I wouldn't mind not playing for the world title. Six, seven events a year is enough for me. I am not going to play 12, like these young guys. They can do it, but it's something I wouldn't even like to think of (laughs).'

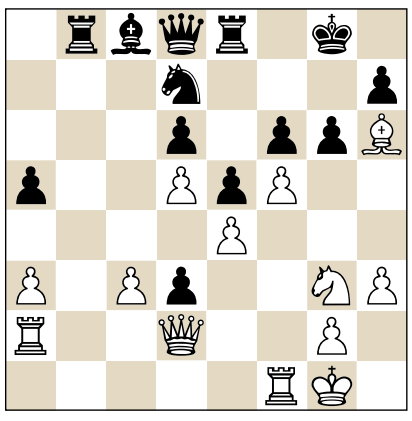
*Still surprised that you won this one?*
'I got used to it. When you get plus-5 and then you have two games with White in the last three rounds, you get the idea that you are probably going to win. But it was not over till yesterday. I didn't know if Vishy was going to play for a win or just play normally. He played several very good openings with Black, but these openings are useless to play for a win with. But if you want to play for a win and take risks like Magnus did yesterday, then anything can happen…

*The Norwegian press never stopped talking about Magnus's loss on time. What did you tell them in the end?*
'Well, it was not my fault obviously, I didn't feel guilty. But in general he doesn't start well in tournaments. In Wijk aan Zee he lost to Wojtaszek and then he won six in a row. But, there's nothing wrong with a bad result from time to time… Even for the media, to have a different winner. The media tend to create the impression that the World Champion is God, and that the guys he is playing against are hardly moving the pieces. The Norwegian media have to realize that he's facing strong opposition and that he can lose games against many people. Fabiano, Vishy, almost anyone can beat him. It happens.' ■

continued from page 21

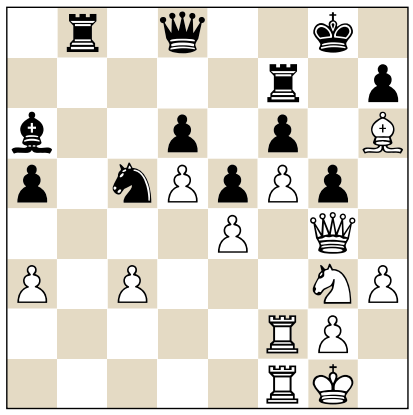


**27...♘d3!?** Black is actually very fast. **28.♗xd3 cxd3**

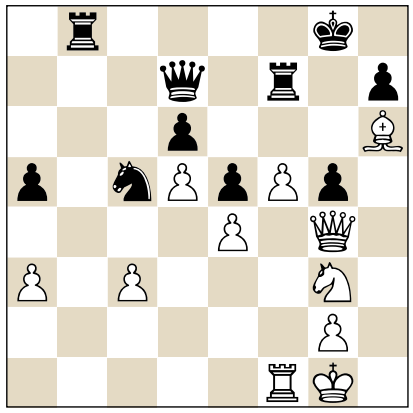


**29.♕d1**
After 29.♕xd3 ♕b6+, followed by 30...♗a6, Black has the initiative. Anand's move works both vertically and diagonally. The a-rook can come to f2 and the queen may go to g4.
**29...♖e7 30.♖af2 ♖f7 31.♕xd3**
Black doesn't come that fast now, as there is no check on b6.

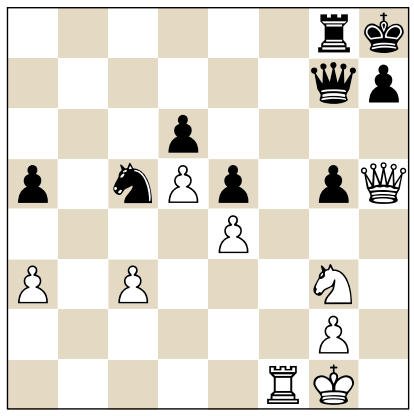
**31...♘c5 32.♕f3 ♗a6 33.♕g4 g5**
I'm surprised to see that my computer suggests 33...♗c8 as Black's first choice. If only Black had time to throw in both ...♔h8 and ...g5, he would actually be quite solid.



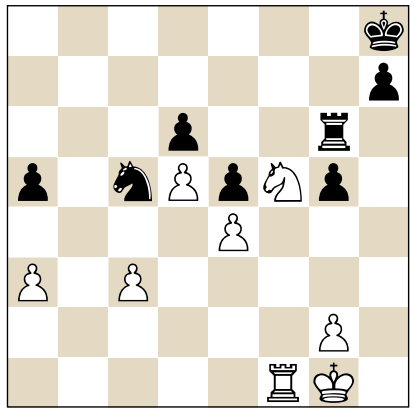
**34.h4!** Just in time! After 34.♖d1 ♔h8! Black seems to have succeeded.
**34...♗xf1 35.♖xf1 ♕d7 36.hxg5 fxg5**

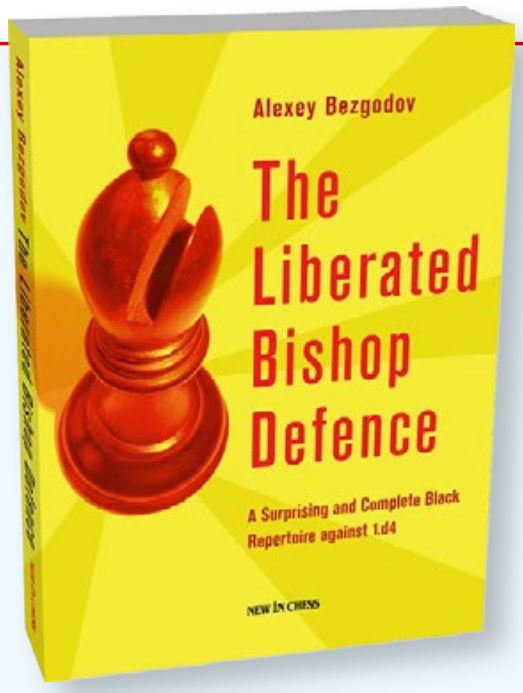


**37.♕h5** Taking on g5, either with the bishop or the queen, is very natural, but White has many good alternatives here.
**37...♔h8 38.f6 ♖g8 39.♗g7+ ♖fxg7 40.fxg7+ ♕xg7**



Magnus said afterwards that he thought he had managed to save himself, but unfortunately for the Norwegian, another white wave is coming.
**41.♘f5 ♕g6 42.♕xg6 ♖xg6**




# A surprising Black repertoire against 1.d4

In many 1.d4 openings, Black has trouble getting his bishop on c8 into play. Former Russian Chess Champion **Alexey Bezgodov** presents a radical solution to this nagging problem: liberate your bishop right away and put it on f5 on the second move!

"Here is your opportunity to score with a novelty! I find *The Liberated Bishop Defence* an excellent opening book. I would give it a 9.9 (out of 10). Why not 10? Well, the diagram on page 195 isn't correct."
***FIDE Master Richard Vedder, Schakers.info***

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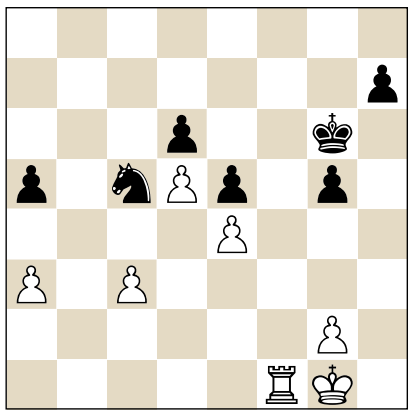
**43.♘e7!** A sad discovery for Magnus. He wasn't saved after all. **43...♔g7** 43...♖h6 44.♖f8+ ♔g7 45.♖c8 ♖f6 46.♘f5+ and taking on d6, is losing even more comprehensively. **44.♘xg6 ♔xg6**



**45.♖f8** Anand finishes very precisely. **45...a4** After 45...♘xe4 both 46.c4 and 46.♖a8 are winning.
**46.c4 h5 47.♔f2**
Black resigned. The king comes to e3 and then White goes for the d-pawn.

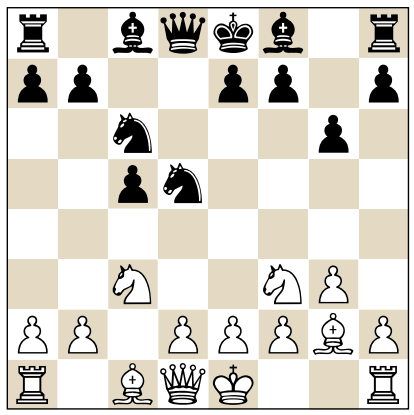
Hikaru Nakamura has also had a great time lately and is now number four in the world. His play in Norway Chess didn't exactly sparkle, but he was never in danger of losing and he took the chances he got, like winning an endgame against his new compatriot, for instance.

NOTES BY
**Hikaru Nakamura**

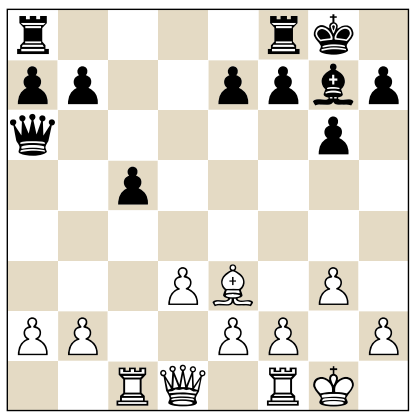
EO 27.16 – A38
**Hikaru Nakamura**
**Fabiano Caruana**
Stavanger 2015 (3)

Recently, everyone has made a big deal of Caruana switching federations to the U.S. and is talking about a so-called rivalry between us. However, I don't think you can call any match-up a rivalry unless there is a fairly balanced record with many victories on both sides (in classical chess Nakamura has won four times against Caruana and lost once, while 19 games ended in a draw – ed.). My rather lopsided score against Caruana suggests otherwise, although I would be the first to admit that I don't believe I have a rivalry with Carlsen based on our mutual score!

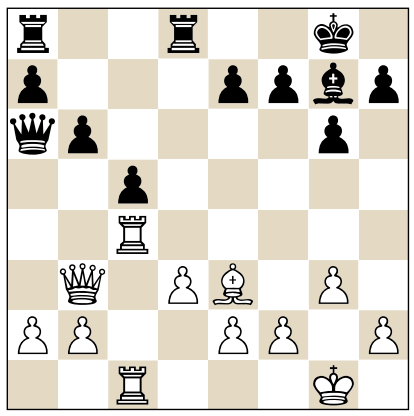
**1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.♘c3 ♘c6 4.g3 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♗g2 g6**
The first surprise of the game. Fabiano had never played this variation before, as far as I can tell.



**7.0-0 ♗g7 8.♘xd5 ♕xd5 9.d3 0-0 10.♗e3 ♗d7!? 11.♘d4 ♕d6 12.♘xc6 ♗xc6 13.♗xc6 ♕xc6 14.♖c1 ♕a6**



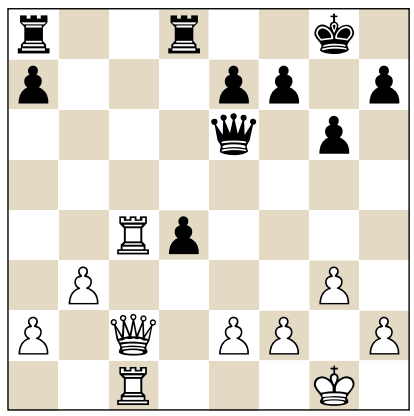
**15.♕b3!?** Not the main move, but I wanted to surprise Fabiano a bit, as he was blitzing out the moves.
**15...b6 16.♖c4 ♖fd8 17.♖fc1**



Strangely, Black has to be a bit careful here and not fall asleep.
**17...♖d7** Both 17...♕b7? 18.♖xc5 and 17...♖ac8? 18.♖a4 ♕b7 19.♖xc5

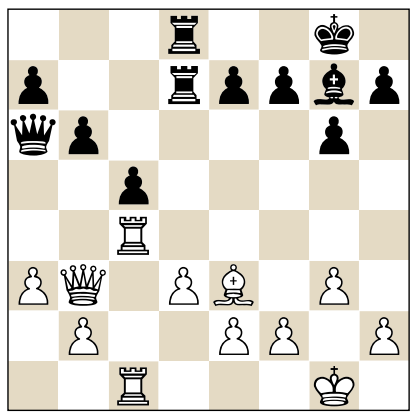
> 'Not a bad move, but a strange one which makes little or no sense.'

are obviously bad for Black, and also after 17...♕c8 18.d4 ♕e6 19.dxc5 bxc5 20.♕c2 ♗d4 21.♗xd4 cxd4 22.b3



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

it is a dream ending for any technical white player!
**18.a3 ♖ad8!**
Fabiano, true to form, found the best idea: doubling the rooks on the d-file, with the idea of ...♗d4.

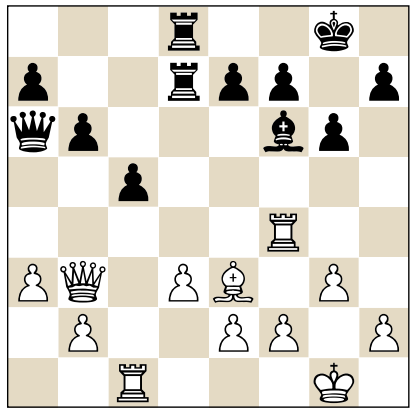


**19.♖f4!?** Even after the game, I can't really explain this move other than

that I couldn't find anything which would yield White an advantage. And I figured that if Black went ...e6 at some point, then ♗g5 would be annoying. I'm not really sure if that makes any sense, though.

**19...♗f6?!**

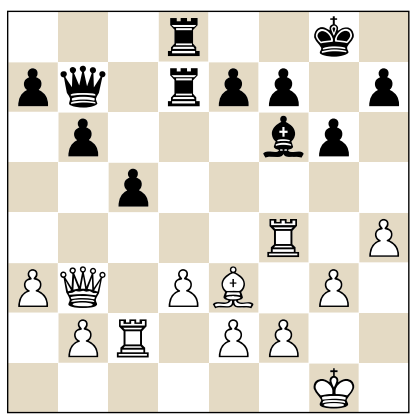
Not a bad move, but a strange one which makes little or no sense. After 19...e6 20.♖a4 ♕b7 21.♕b5 ♕d5 22.♖ac4 (after 22.b4, 22...♕b3 23.♗g5 is the idea, except it doesn't work at all!: 23...f6 24.♗f4 a5!, and suddenly the really bizarre positions of the queen on b5 and the rook on a4 are a huge problem) 22...♕b7 23.♖a4 leads to a more or less forced repetition.



**20.h4**

After 20.♕a2 ♔g7 21.h4 h5 22.♖fc4 ♗d4 23.♗xd4+ ♖xd4 24.♖xd4 ♖xd4 25.b4 cxb4 (25...♖xb4?? 26.♕a1+ ♖d4 27.e3 – oops!) 26.♕b2 e5 27.axb4 ♕b7 White has absolutely zilch.

**20...♕b7 21.♖c2**



**21...♕b8?!**

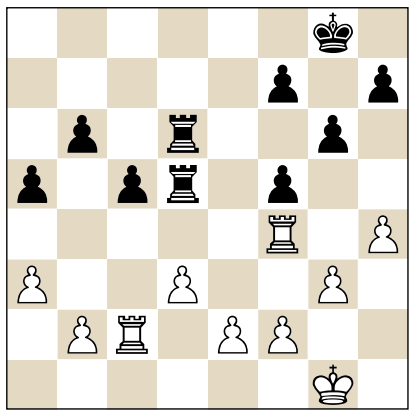
Other than suddenly thinking that he might be better, I don't understand why Fabiano didn't go 21...♕d5 and simplify to a completely equal end-

NEW IN CHESS

**'Hikaru Nakamura's play in Norway Chess didn't exactly sparkle, but he was never in danger of losing and he took the chances he got.'**

game. After 21...♕d5 22.♕xd5 ♖xd5 23.b4 ♗d4 24.♗xd4 cxd4 Black is utterly fine, as the rook on f4 is rather clumsy.

**22.♖f3 ♖d5 23.♗g5 ♕d6 24.♗xf6 exf6 25.♕a4 a5 26.♕f4 f5 27.♕xd6 ♖8xd6 28.♖f4**

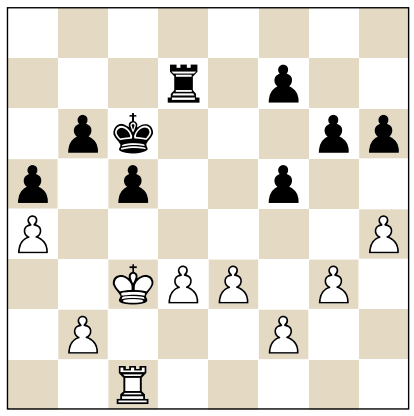


**28...♖d4?!**

Another technical mistake by Fabiano. With both rooks on the board, Black can never be in any danger, but after simplifying there can be some long-term issues without precise play, as the game shows.

After 28...♖d8 29.b4 cxb4 30.axb4 a4 31.b5 ♖a8 32.♖a2 a3 33.♖b4 ♖a5 34.♖b3 ♖dxb5 35.♖xb5 ♖xb5 36.♖xa3 ♖b1+ 37.♔g2 b5 38.♔f3 b4 39.♖a5 b3 40.♖b5 b2 White can never make progress and the position is simply drawn.

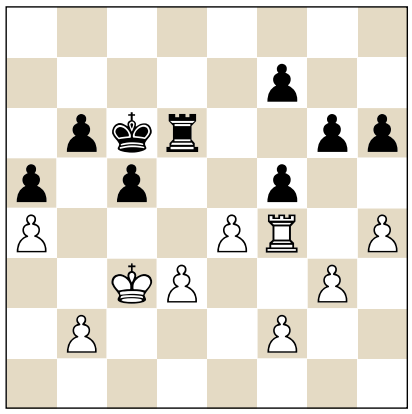
**29.♖xd4 ♖xd4 30.♔g2 ♔g7 31.♖c3 ♔f6 32.e3 ♖d6 33.♔f3 ♔e5 34.a4 ♔d5 35.♔e2 ♖d7 36.♔d2 h6 37.♖c1 ♔c6 38.♔c3**



**38...b5?!**

I suspect that Fabiano started worrying about the long-term prospects of the endgame, and being low on time didn't help. That being said, as computers show time and time again, the threats really aren't very serious in virtually all cases. So sit back, relax and play passive defence! For instance: 38...♔d5 39.♔d2 ♔c6 40.♖c4 ♖d5 41.♔c3 ♖d7 42.♖f4 ♖d6

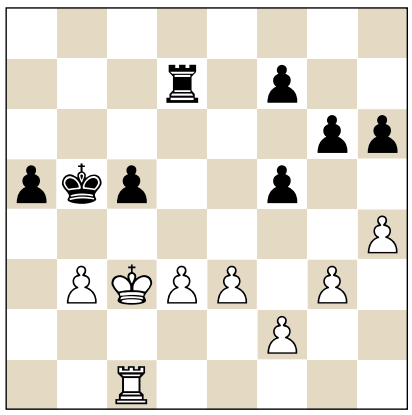
43.e4 (43.h5 ♔d5 44.♖h4 g5 45.♖c4 ♔e5 46.♔d2 ♔d5 is also completely drawn)



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

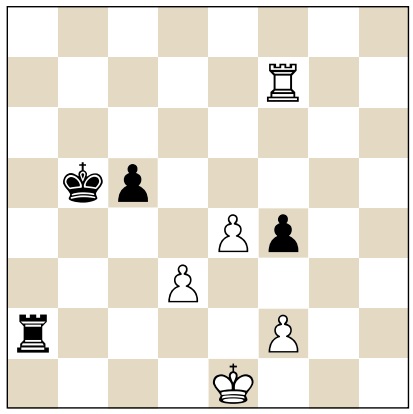
43...♖d4!. This kills the whole ♖f4 idea. After 43...fxe4?! 44.dxe4 f6 45.h5 g5 46.♖f5 Black will be passive, and although White is pressing, I suspect that even this endgame is a draw with precise play.

**39.axb5+ ♔xb5 40.b3**



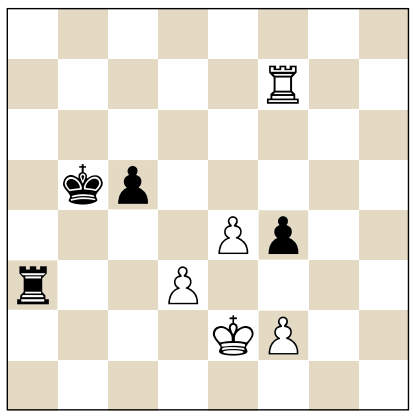
**40...g5?** Even after this blunder the position is still probably drawn, but it goes from moderately difficult to very hard and requires absolutely precision. Better was 40...h5 41.♖a1 ♖d6 42.♖a4 ♖c6 43.♖f4 ♖e6, and again this looks scary at first glance, but Black will hold easily.

**41.hxg5 hxg5 42.♖h1 ♖a7 43.♖h7 f4 44.gxf4 gxf4 45.e4 a4 46.bxa4+ ♖xa4 47.♖xf7 ♖a3+ 48.♔d2 ♖a2+ 49.♔e1**



**49...♖a3** After 49...♔b4 50.♖xf4 ♔c3 51.♖f3 ♔d4 52.♖e3 ♔e5 53.♔f1 White should be winning eventually.

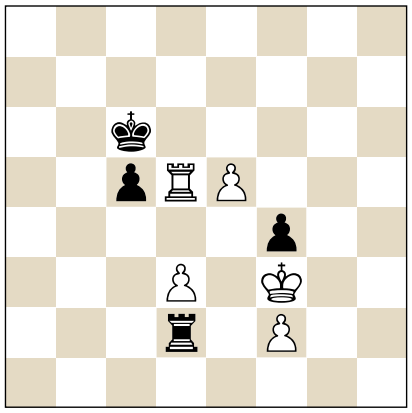
**50.♔e2**



**50...♖a2+**

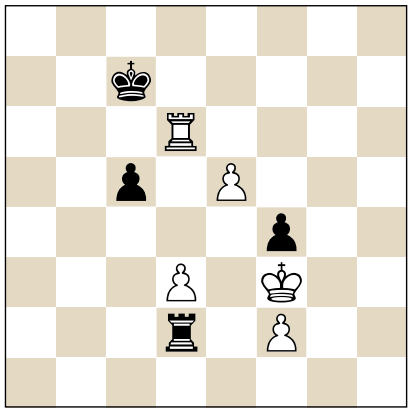
White also wins after 50...c4 51.dxc4+ ♔xc4 52.♖xf4 ♔d4 53.♖g4 ♖b3 54.♔f1 ♖b7 55.♔g2 ♖e7 56.♔f3 ♖f7+ 57.♖f4 ♖e7 58.♖f8.

**51.♔f3 ♖d2 52.♖d7 ♔c6 53.♖d5 ♔b6 54.e5 ♔c6**



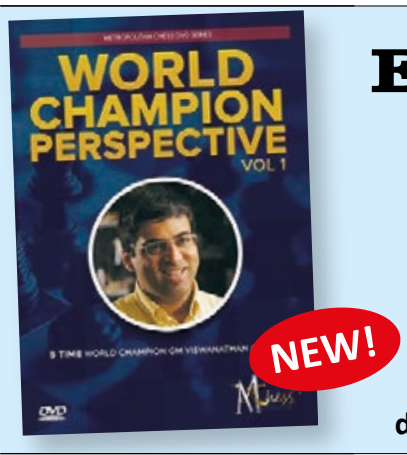
**55.♖d8!** My original idea was 55.e6, but after playing for five hours, who wants to go into such an endgame when there might be some miracle fortress: 55...♔xd5 56.e7 ♖xd3+ 57.♔g4 (one such endgame in which White is probably winning is 57.♔g2 c4 58.e8♕ f3+ 59.♔g3 ♔d4, but White even loses after 57.♔xf4?? ♖d4+ 58.♔f5 ♖e4).

**55...♔c7 56.♖d6**



Fabiano resigned, as he will be unable to avoid the simplification into a simple rook-and-two-pawns against rook finale. For instance: 56...♖c2 (56...♔b7 57.e6 ♔c7 58.e7 ♔xd6 59.e8♕ ♖xd3+ 60.♔xf4 is an easy win) 57.d4 cxd4 58.♖xd4 ♖b2 59.♖xf4 ♔d7 60.♔e4.

■ ■ ■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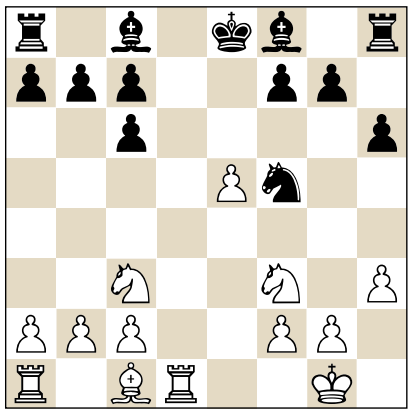
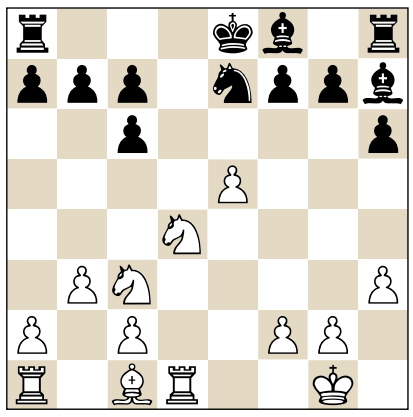
Caruana's peak in the tournament, as for so many others this time, was beating the World Champion.

RL 7.4 – C67
**Fabiano Caruana**
**Magnus Carlsen**
Stavanger 2015 (2)

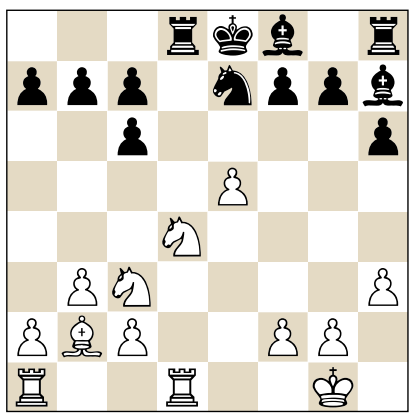
**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6**
Magnus succeeded very well with the Berlin in the two WC-matches against Anand, but in Shamkir 2014, he suffered a defeat against Caruana.
**4.0-0 ♘xe4 5.d4**
Caruana hasn't given up trying to get an advantage in the normal main line. **5...♘d6 6.♗xc6 dxc6 7.dxe5 ♘f5 8.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 9.h3 h6 10.♖d1+ ♔e8 11.♘c3**



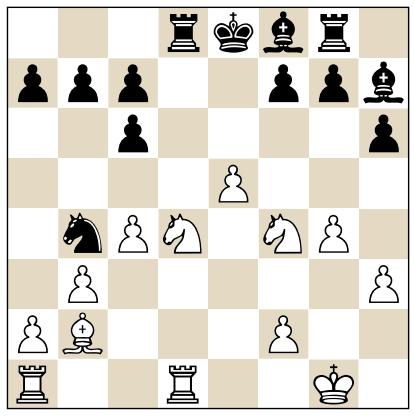
**11...♘e7** In Shamkir, Magnus played 11...♗d7, but after 12.♗f4 ♖d8 13.♘e4 ♗e7 14.g4 ♘h4 15.♘xh4 ♗xh4 16.♔g2 ♗e6 17.f3 b6 18.b3 c5 19.c4 White had a comfortable edge.
**12.b3**
The same combatants had also had this position in Baden-Baden in February this year. Caruana then placed his bishop on f4. This time it goes to b2. It's really hard to understand all the nuances in this line.
**12...♗f5 13.♘d4 ♗h7!?**



It's very rare to see the bishop on this square in the Berlin. I don't know if this was an over-the-board inspiration or a prepared idea, but Magnus is a creative player and likes to explore new territory.
**14.♗b2 ♖d8**



**15.♘ce2!?**
Caruana didn't seem surprised and quickly played this knight manoeuvre. Judit Polgar played 15.e6 against David Howell in the European Team Championship in Warsaw 2013 and seemed to be very close to something.
**15...♘d5 16.c4 ♘b4**
A bishop on h7 and a knight on b4 seems like a very good team, but it soon turns out that the essence here is the white knights in the centre.
**17.♘f4 ♖g8 18.g4**

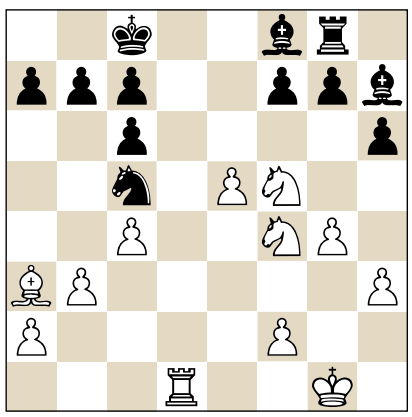


**18...♘a6**
Now the manoeuvring perhaps becomes a bit too sophisticated.
During the game I was wondering

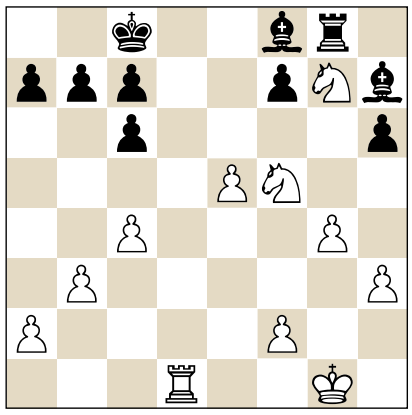
NEW IN CHESS

**On the free day the players visited the Vitenfabrikken (Science Factory) in Sandnes. Fabiano Caruana tried to reduce his mental activity to a minimum in a game of Mindball.**

who would profit from exchanging knights after 18...♘c2, but I presume it would be White. The black position is not very dynamic.
18...♗e7, with the idea of ...♗g5, is also very relevant here.
**19.♘f5 ♘c5 20.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 21.♖d1+ ♔c8 22.♗a3**



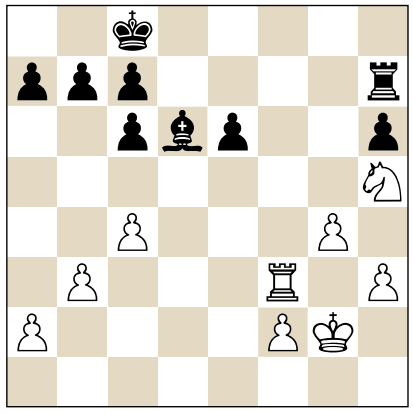
**22...♘e6?**
Magnus was very dissatisfied with this move, and rightly so. He pointed out 22...b6, with patient play.
**23.♘xe6 ♗xa3** Magnus hadn't seen 23...fxe6 24.♗e7!.
**24.♘exg7 ♗f8**



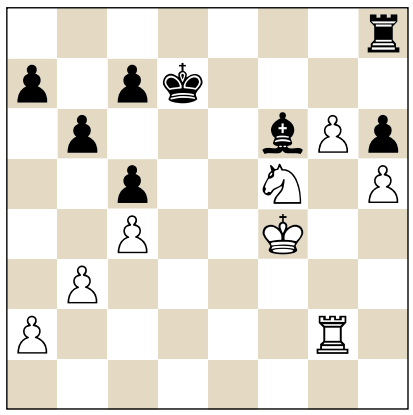
**25.e6**
Simplest. The endgame of rook against the bishops after something like 25.♔h2 ♖xg7 26.♘xg7 ♗xg7 27.f4 also seemed good for White, but there's no need to take any risks.
**25...♗xf5** A sad necessity. **26.♘xf5 fxe6 27.♘g3** This is just sad for Black. **27...♗e7 28.♔g2 ♖f8 29.♖d3 ♖f7 30.♘h5 ♗d6 31.♖f3 ♖h7**
Magnus was hoping for some blockade, but Caruana completes the job with flawless technique.

NEW IN CHESS

**His play may have left a lot to be desired, but for the local fans Magnus Carlsen remained easily the most popular player of Norway Chess 2015.**

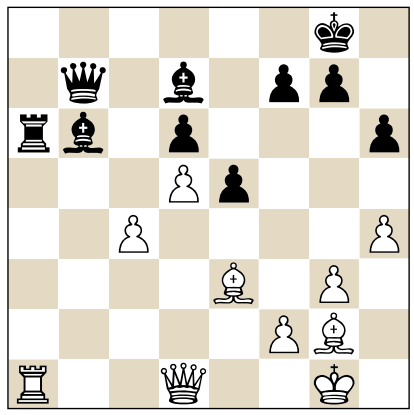


**32.♖e3 ♖e7 33.f4 ♗a3 34.♔f3 ♗b2 35.♖e2 ♗c3 36.g5 ♔d7 37.♔g4 ♖e8 38.♘g3 ♖h8 39.h4 b6 40.h5 c5 41.g6 ♖e8 42.f5 exf5+ 43.♔f4 ♖h8 44.♘xf5 ♗f6 45.♖g2**



Black resigned.

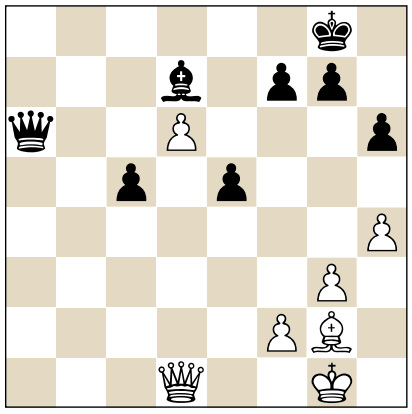
Magnus never managed to recover from his horrible start. After four rounds the World Champion had only a half point. He said he was both sleeping and feeling well, but somehow everything went wrong. Only against Alexander Grischuk did we see some good old 'Magnus magic'.



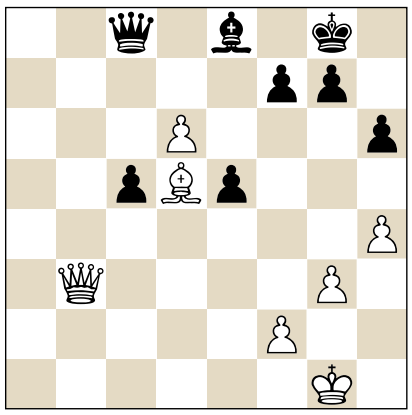
**Carlsen-Grischuk**
Stavanger 2015 (5)
position after 25...♗b6

Magnus surely hasn't been better at any stage of the game, but somehow, out of nothing, he now manages to create challenges for his opponent. **26.c5 ♗xc5 27.♗xc5 dxc5 28.d6 ♕b6** There should be plenty of ways for Black to at least equalize,

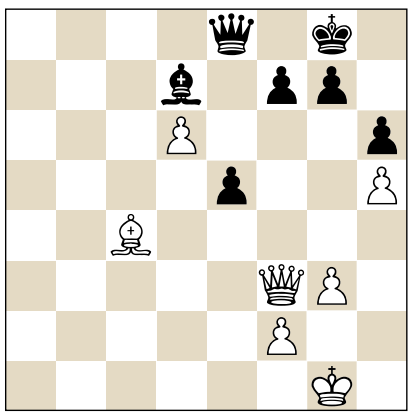
but as usual Grischuk had little time and Magnus is a master in exploiting precisely that. **29.♖xa6 ♕xa6**



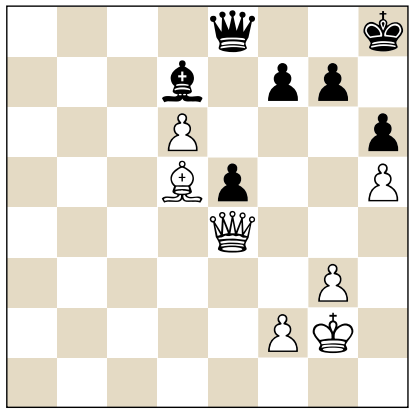
**30.♗d5! ♕c8?!** Again Black has different alternatives, but in his time-trouble, Grischuk allows Magnus to increase the pressure. **31.♕b3 ♗e8**



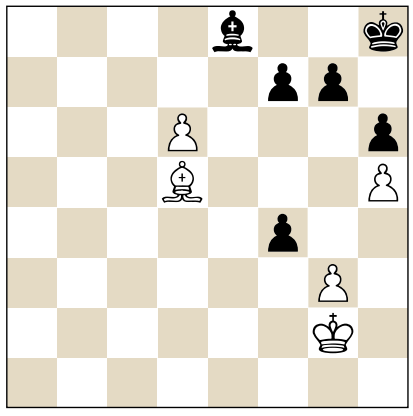
**32.♕c3!** White will now win back the pawn. **32...c4 33.♗xc4 ♗d7 34.♕b3 ♕e8 35.♕f3 ♔f8 36.h5 ♔g8**



Magnus has got the maximum out of the position. Now even the king-side is fixed in White's favour. Black could have put his pawn on g6 and the king on g7 a while ago if he had known he would end up with this. However, as Magnus said, Black will still have to struggle. If nothing else, White may send his king to the queenside. **37.♕e4 ♗c6 38.♗d5 ♗d7 39.♔g2 ♔h8**

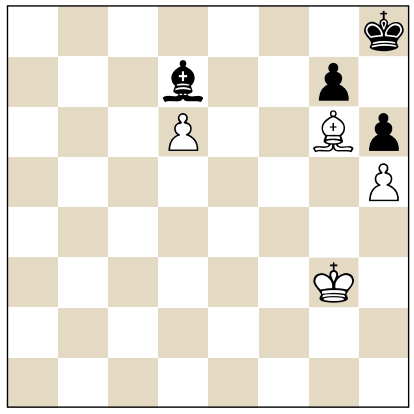


**40.f4!?** Very typically Magnus. Maybe 40.f4 wasn't even the best move, but it puts Grischuk in an extremely difficult position with only 20 seconds left on the clock. **40...exf4?** Black could have fought on with 40...f6. It wasn't necessarily to White's advantage to expose his king, but obviously Black would still have a very hard defensive task ahead. **41.♕xe8+ ♗xe8**



> 'This is Magnus' first very bad tournament since he became absorbed by the game at the age of nine. How will he handle this?'

**42.♗xf7!** Grischuk finally had time to think, but now it was too late. White wins thanks to a very precise manoeuvre that surely was impossible to see some moves ago, with only seconds left on the clock. **42...♗c6+ 43.♔f2 fxg3+ 44.♔xg3 ♗d7** Black's only chance was 44...g5 45.hxg6 ♔g7. However, 46.♔g4! is just in time. White gets his king to h5 in a perfect way. In the TV-studio we were wondering if it was reciprocal zugzwang after 46...♗d7+ 47.♔h5, but Magnus quickly showed us that White would even win with him to move. With Black to move there's no doubt. After 47...♗c6 48.♗e6 ♗f3+ 49.♗g4 the d-pawn decides. **45.♗g6**

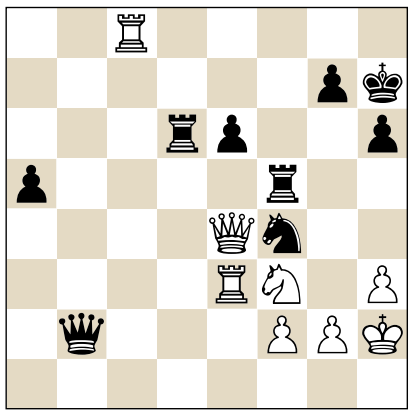


Black resigned. Grischuk didn't need to test Magnus's technique on this. Black can't get out with the king. After winning the bishop for the d-pawn, Magnus can put the king on e7, the bishop on f7 with the plan of ♔f8 and ♗g8 and zugzwang. If Black tries …g7-g5 after ♗f7 in this scenario, White plays hxg6 and is in time to catch the h-pawn.

As far as I can remember, this is Magnus' first very bad tournament since he became absorbed by the game at the age of nine. How will he handle this? Will he strike back with brutal force, as he's done so many times before? Or has 'the magic' been broken? Will the others now view him differently?

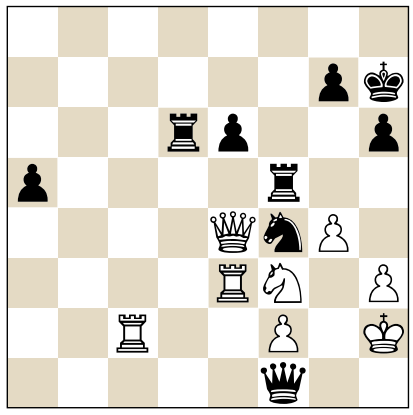
Against Levon Aronian, Magnus even was in bad time-trouble, which almost never happens. The Armenian, however, was in even worse

form than Magnus. After quite a bad game – his worst in the tournament, according to Magnus – a very complex position arose:



**Carlsen-Aronian**
Stavanger 2015 (8)
position after 35...♘f4

With almost no time left on the clock it's impossible for a human to see 36.♘h4 ♕xf2 37.♖g3!, and White strikes on g7 with the rook and then on f5 with the knight after both 37...♘e2 and 37...♖d1. It's mate or winning the queen by force, according to the computer. Magnus chose the perhaps more natural **36.♖c2** The first move that comes to mind is 36...♕b8, eyeing the king from afar. After 37.g4 ♘g6 38.gxf5 exf5 the White queen has no good squares. The queen will be gone with a clever rook check next move. 37.♘h4 ♖d4! is also critical for White, certainly with only seconds left on the clock.
**36...♕a1?? 37.g4 ♕f1**



**38.♘e1!** Aronian hadn't seen this. Magnus blitzed it out immediately. Magnus had just seconds left, but there's nothing Black can do. Aronian spent his last 15 minutes and tried **38...♘h5 39.gxf5 exf5 40.♕c4** and then it was time to resign.

**Not in their best shape, but having a good time: Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, Levon Aronian and Alexander Grischuk.**

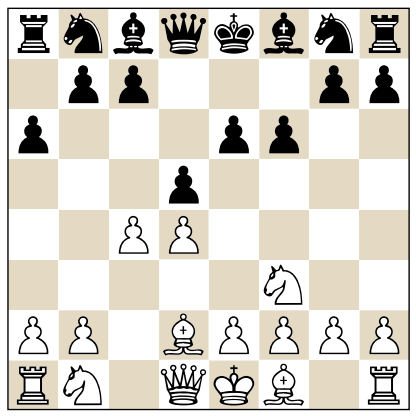
NEW IN CHESS

'I'm devastated', was all Aronian could say afterwards. And it got even worse for the two giants. Aronian lost to Nakamura in the last round, while Magnus got it rubbed in even more that something was horribly wrong by losing to Jon Ludvig Hammer, his second and school mate from the good old days.

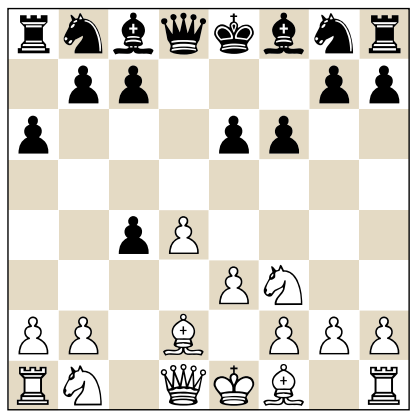
NOTES BY
**Jon Ludvig Hammer**

QO 16.3 – D30
**Jon Ludvig Hammer**
**Magnus Carlsen**
Stavanger 2015 (9)

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 a6 4.♗g5 f6 5.♗d2**



I knew Magnus would surprise me in the opening, and I don't like losing pawns – but 5.♗d2 had some nice hidden points.
**5...dxc4 6.e3**

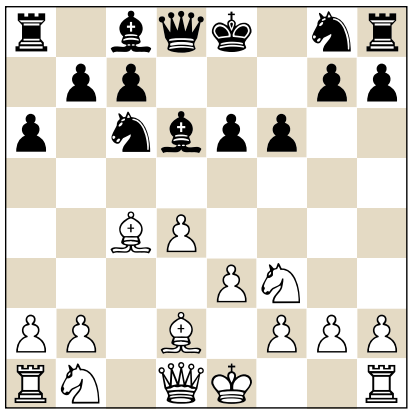


**6...♘c6** 6...b5 7.a4 ♗b7 8.axb5 axb5 9.♖xa8 ♗xa8 10.b3 c5 would be the logical follow-up of Black's aggres-

sive play, but now we see the virtue of 5.♗d2: at least I get my pawn back!

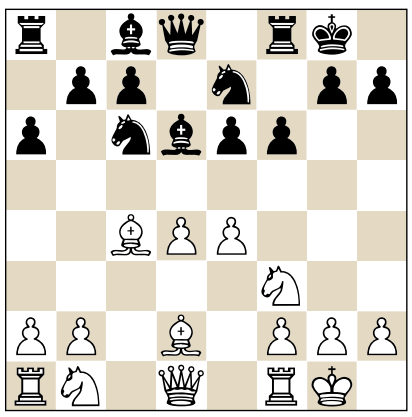
**7.♗xc4 ♗d6**

Magnus's last moves were eccentric to say the least – but how to develop the pieces? I didn't find the right way.



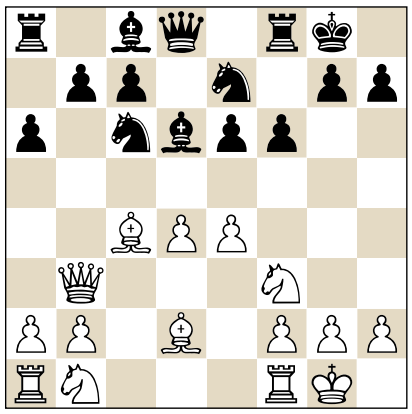
**8.e4** Magnus's suggestion of 8.0-0 ♘ge7 9.♘c3 0-0 10.♘e4 would leave White much, much better.

**8...♘ge7 9.0-0 0-0**



Black has a very easy plan of ...♔h8, ...♘g6 and ...e5 – getting some counterplay on the dark squares.

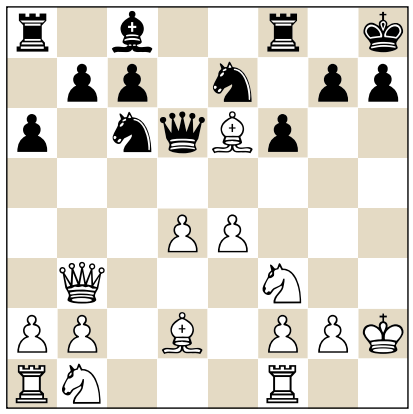
**10.♕b3**



**10...♔h8**

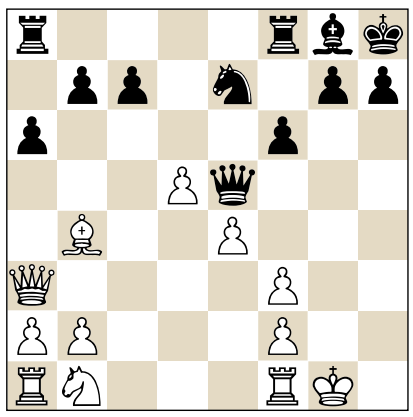
This was a really big mistake. Black doesn't lose a pawn, but he exchanges a central pawn for a rook pawn, and lets White get a good grip on the position with the e4/d5-pawn formation.

**11.♗xe6 ♗xh2+ 12.♔xh2 ♕d6+**



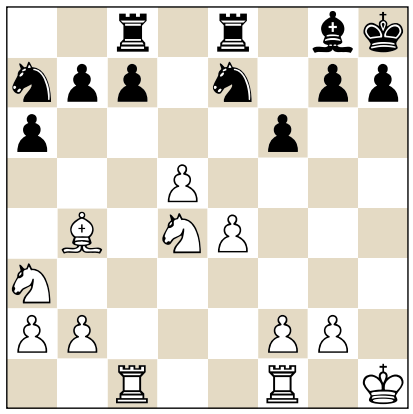
**13.♔h1**

I couldn't really spot the difference between h1 and g1, but in the line 13.♔g1 ♗xe6 14.d5 ♗g8 15.♕a3 ♘e5 16.♗b4 ♘xf3+ 17.gxf3 ♕e5



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

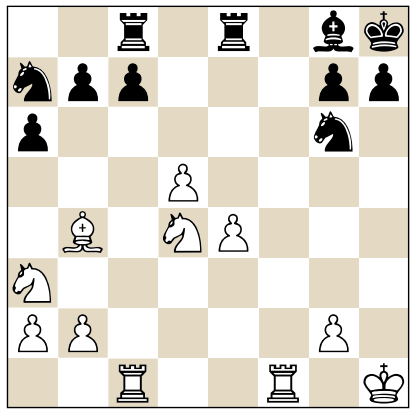
Black gets away with a perpetual, so I felt h1 made sense. **13...♗xe6 14.d5 ♗g8 15.♕a3 ♕xa3 16.♘xa3 ♘a7 17.♗b4 ♖fe8 18.♖ac1 ♖ac8 19.♘d4**



**19...f5**

During the game I felt this was a pretty significant mistake, as it really weakens Black's king position. My intuition was right, but my execution was not. My main line was 19... b6, threatening ...c5 – but there's no joy for Black when he doesn't have a single active piece.

**20.f3 fxe4 21.fxe4 ♘g6**

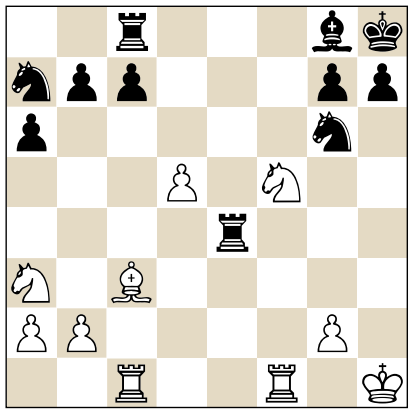


**22.♘f5**

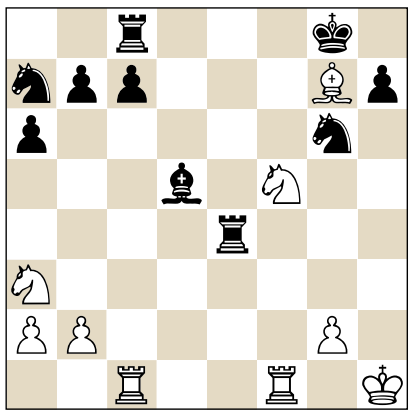
22.♖fe1 would have been good. I couldn't find out what to do on 22...♘f4, with a big fork coming on

On the final day Jon Ludvig Hammer reached his desired score by beating World Champion and former schoolmate Magnus Carlsen.

d3, but 23.♗c3 ♘d3 24.♘f5 solves it nicely. **22...♖xe4 23.♗c3**



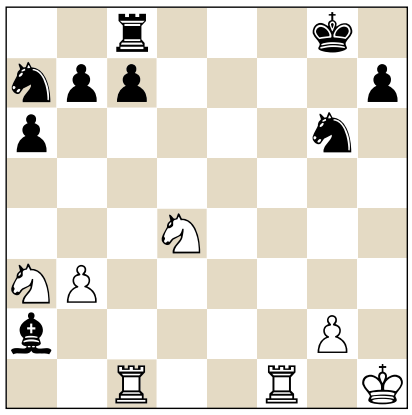
**23...♗xd5** 23...h6 would have been a much better try, and Black has good survival chances after 24.♘xg7 ♔h7 25.♘e6 c6. **24.♗xg7+ ♔g8**



**25.♗d4**

Magnus actually admitted he had missed this move, hitting the knight on a7 – it just wasn't his tournament.

**25...♖xd4 26.♘xd4 ♗xa2 27.b3**

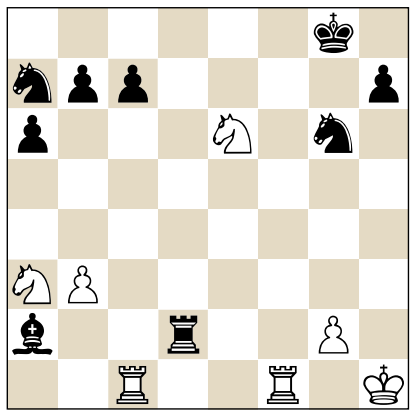


**27...♖d8** 27...c5 should have been tried, but we were both under the impression that White wins a pawn and the endgame after 28.♖f2 cxd4 29.♖xc8+ ♘xc8 30.♖xa2 ♘f4 31.♖d2 ♘e6 32.♘c2. However, after 32...♘d6 it turns out that Black has tactical

'Magnus actually admitted he had missed this move, hitting the knight on a7 – it just wasn't his tournament.'

tricks to keep the pawn alive. Therefore White ought to try 31.♘c4, with some winning chances.

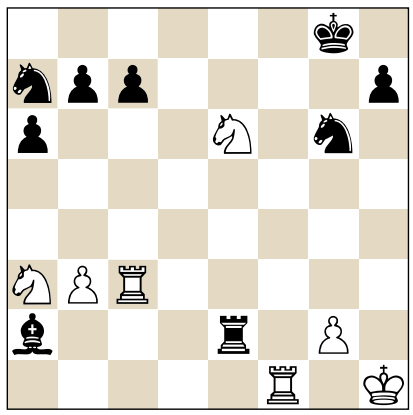
**28.♘e6 ♖d2** It never rains but it pours – and one mistake often follows another.



**29.♖c3**

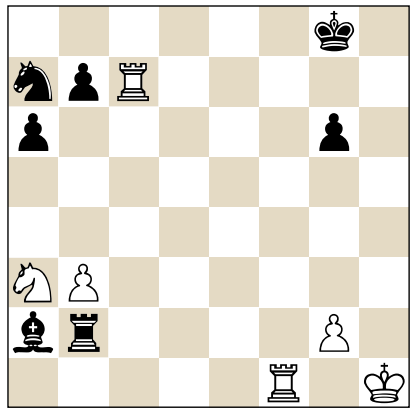
A very good move, keeping the bishop locked out, and thinking about two rooks on the f-file with a mate on f8.

**29...♖e2**



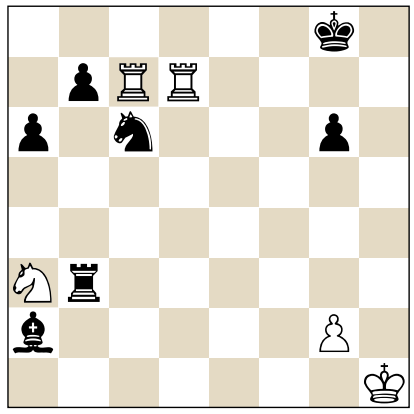
**30.♘f4** 30.♖f6 forces instant resignation, as the idea I had on the last move (♖cf3) cannot be stopped.

**30...♖b2 31.♘xg6 hxg6 32.♖xc7**



**32...♖xb3** 32...♘c6 would have prolonged the game, but I'm certain 33.♖f6 ♖xb3 34.♖xg6+ ♔f8 35.♘c2 is somehow winning with the two active rooks.

**33.♖d1 ♘c6 34.♖dd7**



The black king is trapped, prompting the king of chess to resign, and give me a fantastic finish to the tournament.

■ ■ ■

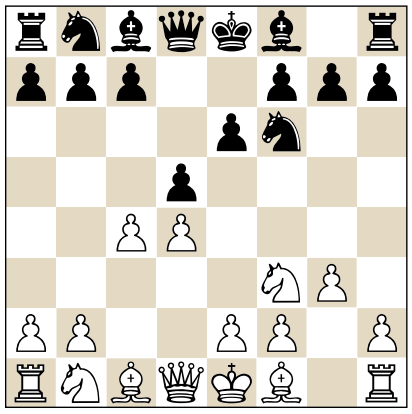
Anish Giri was the fourth player in the tournament with a positive score, and perhaps the final player to be satisfied with his performance. The remaining six all had their disasters, but Giri seems like stability himself. He still complains about his confidence, but after a fantastic result in the French League and then this fair result in Norway Chess, the Dutchman with Russian and Nepalese genes is now number six in the world. I wonder how far he can get when he manages to boost his confidence. Anish turned 21 just after the tournament and surely has an unleashed potential. I used to say the same about Magnus when he was around 2800.

NOTES BY
**Anish Giri**

QI 1.3 – E11
**Anish Giri**
**Veselin Topalov**
Stavanger 2015 (8)

It is not every day that I get to win a game against a legend like Veselin Topalov. When I do, though, I surely like to brag about it. So please bear with me this time.

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.g3**

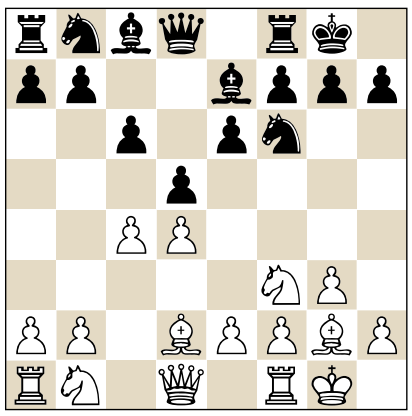


Veselin had been struggling against the Catalan in his match against Vishy Anand in the year 2010. But in recent years he hasn't been facing it all that much.

**4...♗b4+**

This was the antidote that team Topalov had found, but since then the theory has obviously expanded.

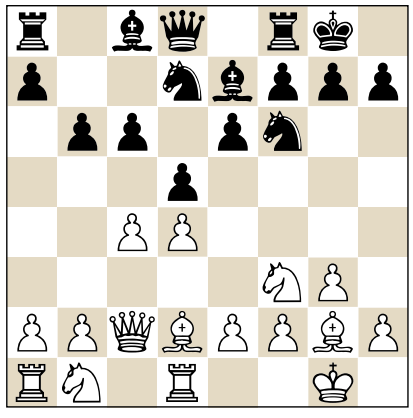
**5.♗d2 ♗e7 6.♗g2 0-0 7.0-0 c6**



**8.♕c2**

8.♗f4 was played in a famous match game, when after 8...dxc4 9.♘e5 b5 10.♘xc6 ♘xc6 11.♗xc6 ♗d7! (a novelty then) Anand found himself having to defend with an extra exchange against a dangerously prepared opponent. Eventually he managed to calm the storm and the game petered out to a draw.

**8...♘bd7 9.♖d1 b6**



**10.b3**

This move looks somewhat premature, but it is a well-respected variation and was tried recently against me by Fabiano Caruana.

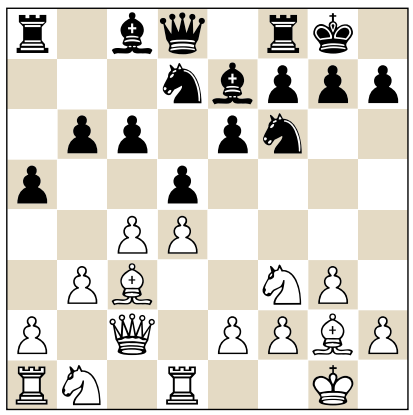
10.♗f4 was played in another Anand-Topalov game, right after the match. Here, too, Topalov went for a dubious but interesting sacrifice early on and made a draw rather effortlessly.

**10...a5!?**

Using the fact that 10.b3 was somewhat slow and non-threatening, Black is also making a waiting move, planning to meet 11.♘c3 with 11...♗a6.

In the afore-mentioned game against Fabiano, I played the main move 10...♗a6, and now White can play the bishop to f4 after all, 11.♗f4, or use its present position on d2 by pushing the a-pawn forward – 11.a4, which was the choice of Fabiano. I miraculously saved that game, but at this point nothing is wrong with Black's position.

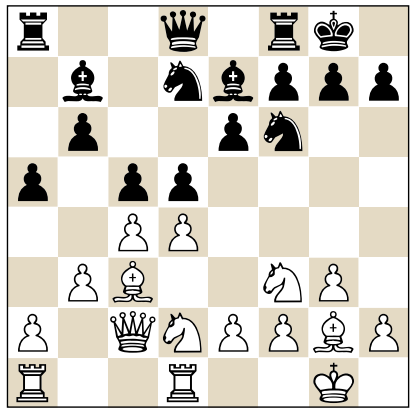
**11.♗c3**



The set-up that people employ here. I was somewhat familiar with the position thanks to a friend of mine. Generally, kids, it is good to have friends.

**11...♗b7 12.♘bd2 c5**

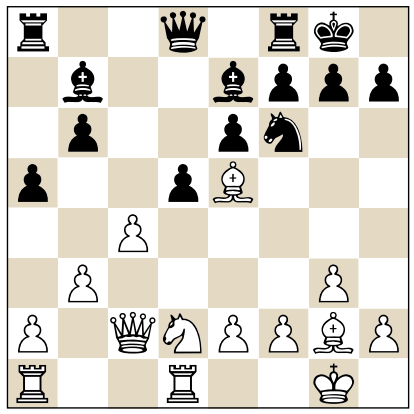
This breakthrough doesn't always mean that Black has solved his opening problems.



**13.♘e5!?**

The critical test. Now the pin along the long diagonal is somewhat unpleasant.

**13...cxd4 14.♗xd4 ♘xe5 15.♗xe5**

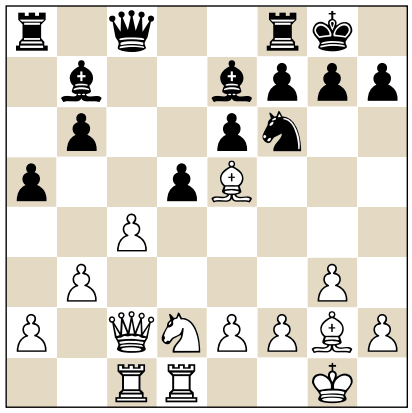


**15...♕c8?!**

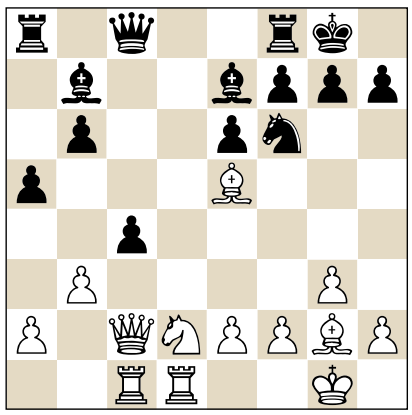
Getting rid of the afore-mentioned pin, but now Black voluntarily signs up for some long-term suffering. A surprising choice from Topalov, but his tournament situation (+5!) and the clock situation (he had burned some time already and I appeared to be still in book) contributed to this poor decision.

Instead, 15...♘g4 is a move you want to play when you are backed up with some computer variations, but even so it is more fun for Black.

**16.♖ac1**



**16...dxc4** 16...♗a3 is equally sad: 17.♗b2 ♗xb2 18.♕xb2 dxc4 19.♘xc4 ♗xg2 20.♔xg2 ♕b7+ 21.f3, when White has typical Catalan pressure: a little more space, weak d6- and c6-squares, and the a5-pawn weakens its b6-colleague as well.

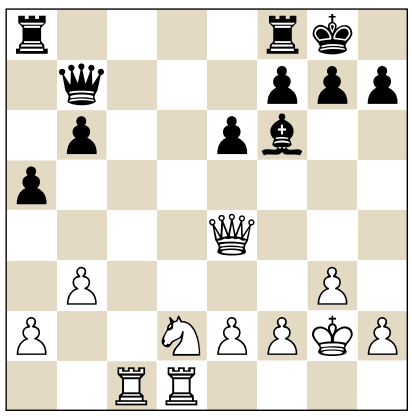


**17.♗xf6!**

A neat positional decision that I was very happy about. Now I am getting the good knight vs. the silly bishop story, the one often told by the great endgame players of the past, e.g. Ulf Andersson and Zoltan Ribli.

**17...♗xf6 18.♕xc4 ♗xg2 19.♔xg2 ♕b7+ 20.♕e4!**

20.♕c6 was not the point: 20...♕xc6+ 21.♖xc6 ♖fd8!.

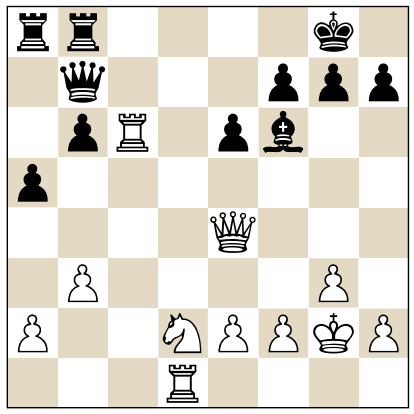


**20...♖fb8!**

This was a big disappointment. The other rook stands better on the a-file, where it might support the future a4 push. Also the king now has its path towards the centre cleared.

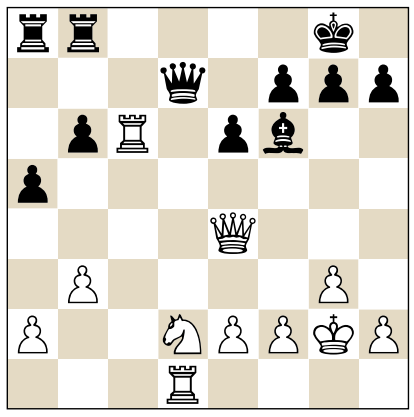
**21.♖c6**

The idea was to set a trap and win some time, but I quickly realized that my trap wouldn't work.



**21...♕d7**

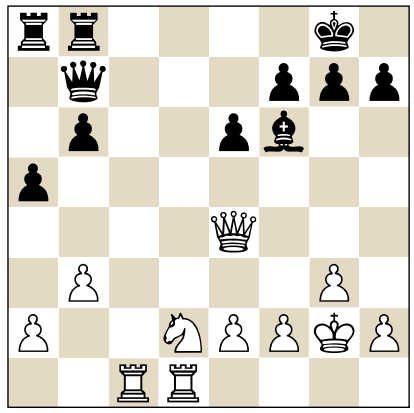
21...♖d8! is sort of nicely met by 22.♖d6 ♕xe4+ 23.♘xe4 ♗e7!, and here I realized that the very little that I might have had is about to vanish. After the game it turned out, however, that Veselin was trying to avoid the endgame with rooks, although I would really be surprised if it is not a pretty easy draw: 24.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 25.♖xd8+ ♗xd8 26.♔f3 ♔f8 27.♔e3 ♔e7 28.♔d3 ♔d7 29.♔c4 ♔c6 30.♘c3, and White has some control, and although I would have tried my best and maybe even would have claimed that I had come very close (Kramnik-style), I don't think much can be squeezed from this position.



**22.♖cc1!**

Happily going back. 22.♖xb6? is too naive: 22...♖d8! 23.♖c6 ♖ac8! and it turns out that White holds, but that was not the plan, of course: 24.♖xc8 ♕xc8 25.e3 ♗e7 26.♔f1! ♗b4 27.♔e2 ♕d7 28.♕c2.

**22...♕b7**

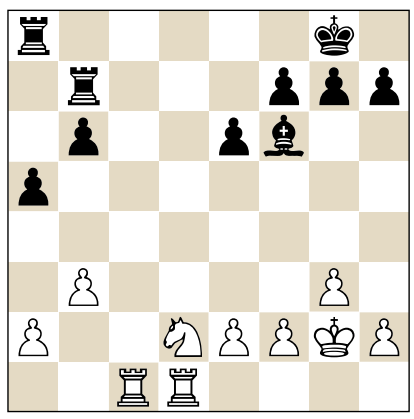


**23.♕xb7**

It was a pity to take, but I really didn't see a move that was more useful than the 23...♗e7 that my opponent would play against any of my waiting moves, e.g. 23.f4.

23.♕f3!? was perhaps the only real alternative, intending to recapture with the king.

**23...♖xb7**



**24.♘e4**

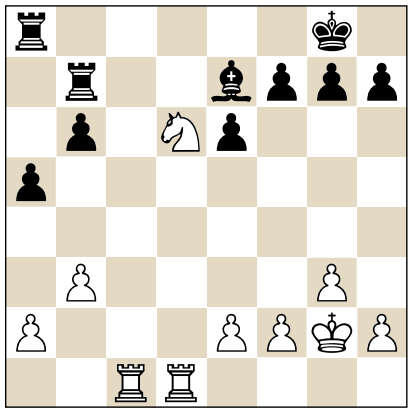
Taking a long route to c4 and asking some questions on the way.

Generally, I didn't think too much of my chances, but since I had received a slight plus, I felt it was my duty to try and make the most of it. After 24.♘c4!?, 24...♗e7 is probably the best. And now 25.a4!? is maybe the most challenging (25.♘e5 was my plan, but here it seems that Black can organize some counterplay: 25...a4!? 26.♖d7 ♖xd7 27.♘xd7 axb3 28.axb3 g5!? 29.♘xb6 ♖b8, and somehow the knight finds itself in trouble after

30.♖c8+ ♖xc8 31.♘xc8 ♗c5, with a draw): 25...g5!? 26.♘e5 b5, and now either 27.♘c6 or 27.♖d7 keeps the pressure. But in the game I eventually got a better version of this.

**24...♗e7 25.♘d6**

Tempting my opponent to go for a highly unpleasant rook ending.



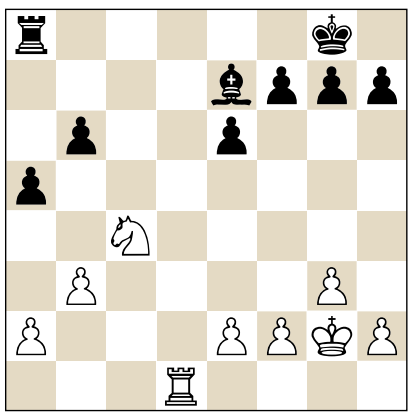
**25...♖d7**

The correct decision. After 25...♗xd6 26.♖xd6 ♔f8 27.♖cc6 b5 28.♖b6 ♖xb6 29.♖xb6 b4 the black rook is pinned down to the defence of the a5-pawn and White needs to create a second front: 30.e4 ♖a7 31.h4! ♔e7 (31...h5 leads to other problems: 32.♖b5 g6 33.e5 ♔e7 34.♔f3 ♔d7 35.♖c5) 32.h5 ♔d7 33.e5 ♔c7 34.♖d6, and Black is doomed to a passive defence, with no guarantee of success.

**26.♘c4 ♖xd1**

26...♖b7 transposes to a position analysed after 24.♘c4!? ♗e7.

**27.♖xd1**

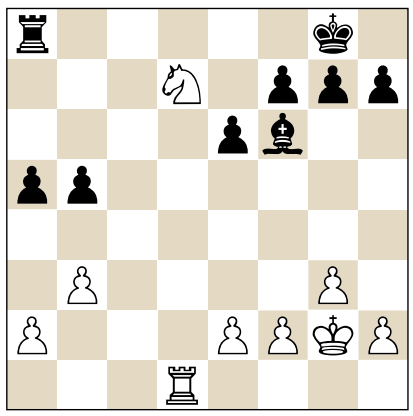


**27...b5**

27...♖d8!? was a relatively simple solution. I hadn't been planning to exchange rooks, but there is no better option: 28.♖c1 ♖c8 29.a4 ♔f8, and I probably have to come back with 30.♖d1, which is then met by 30...♖d8!, trading the rooks after all, and eventually the best White can get is the king on c4 and the knight on d3 (via b2). Then I push my kingside pawns with something like h3/g4 and hope to create one more weakness, keeping the idea of a b4 break in mind, or the transfer of the knight to d4.

It sounds like a lot of ideas, but the position is probably not too hard to defend for Black. The word 'probably' is what bothered Veselin.

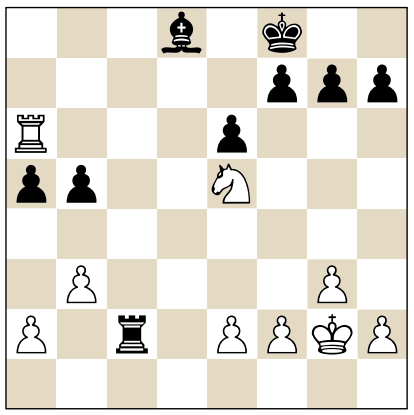
**28.♘e5 ♗f6** 28...♖d8 can now be met by 29.♖c1!. **29.♘d7**



The knight does a good job there and all I want is my rook to invade to c7.

**29...a4?** Up to this point, all I could wish for was to keep the illusion of some symbolic pressure, but here I suddenly got very inspired. I am quite proud that I sensed the moment when the position had changed.

29...♖c8! is the key to solving Black's problems. The c-file is under control now: 30.♖d6 (this looks threatening) 30...♗d8 31.♘e5 ♔f8 32.♖a6 ♖c2!.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

This looks a bit scary, but the defence works like a Swiss watch: 33.♘c6 ♔e8!.

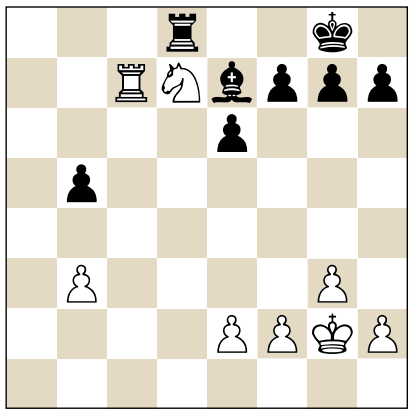
**30.♖c1! axb3**

30...a3 might appear tempting, but the advanced a-pawn is not going to advance any further, ever.

**31.axb3 ♗e7 32.♖c7 ♖d8**

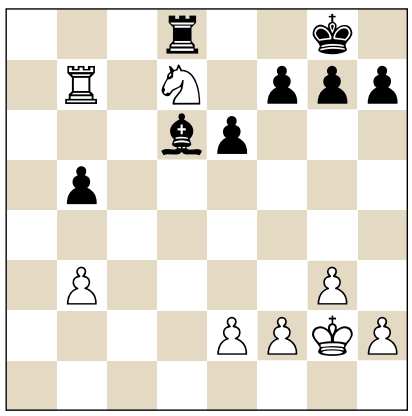
NEW IN CHESS

**Anish Giri and Sopiko Guramishvili, a month before their wedding, on the wonderful flower island Flor & Fjaere, where the blitz tournament was held.**



**33.♖b7!** 33.♘c5 looked good, too, but it is in fact not so much after 33...♔f8 34.♘d3 g5! 35.♖b7 ♖d5!, when it's not clear how to make progress and disturb the rook in the middle of the board.

**33...♗d6**

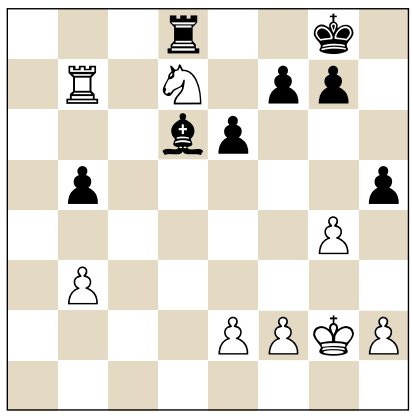


**34.g4!?**

After some thought I decided to fix the kingside pawns: first go g4, then h4-h5 and later see how to proceed. The only thing to watch out for is a sudden activation of the rook with ...♖c8. My opponent's reply came as a surprise.

**34...h5!?**

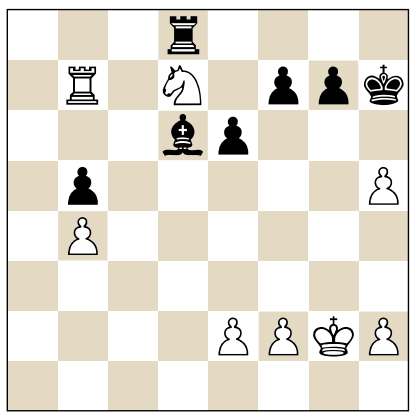
A nice attempt to exchange some pawns, but it doesn't save Black from trouble. It is the normal way to proceed, as a passive defence was not too appealing: 34...b4 35.h4 h5!? (another version of Topalov's idea, but here it meets a different reply. 35...h6 36.h5 is really bad. White has a lot of ideas at his disposal, the most aggressive one being e4-e5. Eventually, if Black stands still for too long, he risks getting squeezed or losing his b4-pawn) 36.g5! ♔h7 37.e3 ♔g6 38.f4, and it turns out that Black's kingside is as vulnerable as ever.



**35.gxh5!** Such pawns should always be captured, especially in the endgame.

**35...♔h7** 35...b4 is too slow: 36.e4! ♔h7 37.e5 ♗e7 38.♘b8!, and Black is going to lose the b4-pawn.

**36.b4!** You can always be certain that your opponent has missed a move like this.

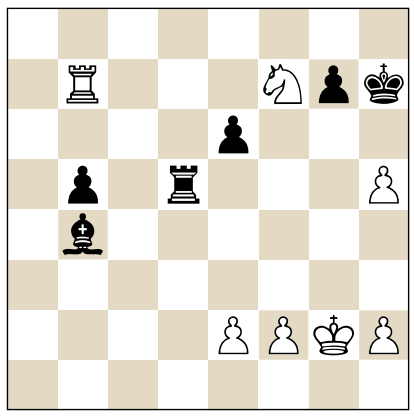


**36...♗xb4** Black had a very unpleasant choice here. During the game I thought that this was the decisive mistake, but this doesn't seem to be the case.

36...♔g8 37.e3 (37.♘c5 ♖b8!) 37...♗xb4 38.♘e5 ♖f8 39.♖xb5 is very depressing, but at least everything is on one flank. Then again, the knight is known to be superior in such cases.

36...♔h6 leads to a bad rook ending, but during the game I felt it was more likely a draw than a win. I still think so: 37.♘c5 (37.♔f3 f5!) 37...♗xc5 38.bxc5 f5 39.♖xb5 ♖d5 40.♔f3 ♔xh5 41.♖b7 (now forced, but probably the best chance) 41...♖xc5 42.♖xg7, and this endgame is very unpleasant, with the king cut off. Though after 42...e5 it's not clear how White can make any progress.

**37.♘e5 ♖d5 38.♘xf7**

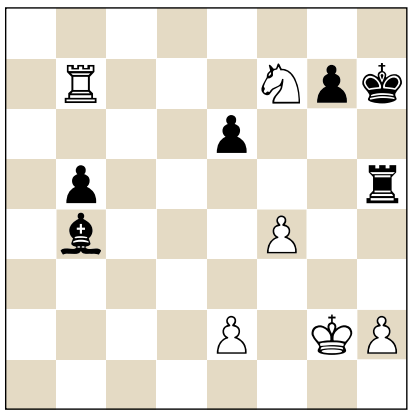


**38...♖xh5** 38...♗d2 looked like a better defence to me, but I would surely have been happy to find 39.e3 ♖xh5 40.h4!, with the idea of 40...♖xh4? 41.♘g5+ ♔g6 42.♘f3!, winning a piece.

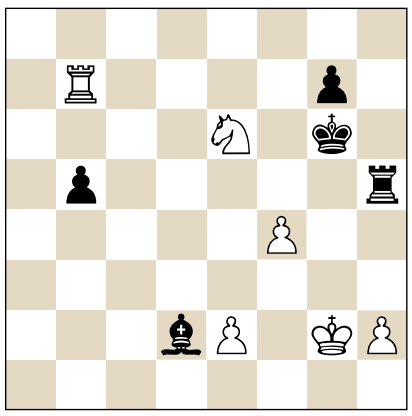
NEW IN CHESS

Norway Chess 2015 had barely ended or Simen Agdestein opened his laptop to write this report.

**39.f4!** ♔**g6** A mistake, but this position will occur again later on in the game. **40.**♘**e5+!** ♔**h7** Originally I had missed this move. For a second I was upset, but I quickly noticed that besides capturing the b5-pawn I have many ideas in this position.
**41.**♘**f7** I already saw that ♘f3 was at least as good an option, but first of all I couldn't find any difference between the two moves, as I was intending 42.♘g5 anyway, and secondly repeating moves is my hobby.

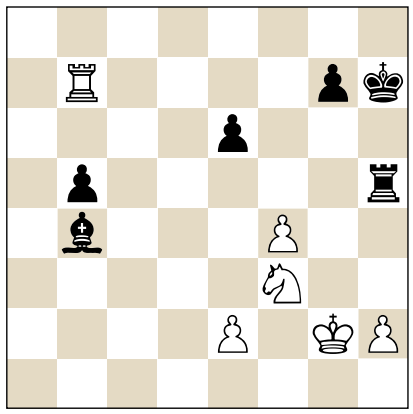


**41...**♔**g6**
Veselin made this move anyway, even after burning a lot of time. Of course, he was hoping for 42.♘g5.
41...♗d2! was the way to go: 42.♘g5+ ♔g6 43.♘xe6, and here the machine points out the only move

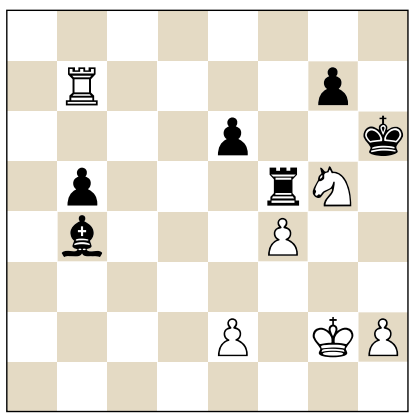


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

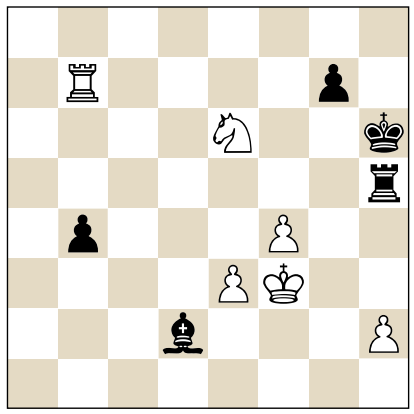
43...♖h4!!, and somehow in all variations it seems that Black is just not over the edge yet. For example 44.♔f3 b4 45.e4 ♔f6 46.♖b6 ♔e7, and suddenly Black's pieces gain some kind of coordination, keeping an eye on the f4- and h2-pawns, and ...b4-b3 is an important resource too.
**42.**♘**e5+** ♔**h7 43.**♘**f3!**



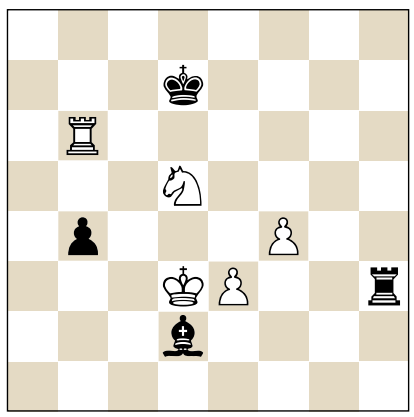
**43...**♖**f5?** Once again after a lot of thought. It is difficult when each variation you calculate is worse than the previous one. 43...♔g6 was the only move to struggle on.
**44.**♘**g5+** ♔**h6**



**45.**♔**f3!** Not a difficult move to find. All White's pieces are excellently placed and the e6-pawn is doomed. Whatever counterplay you try to set up, there is a fork coming right at you. 45.♘xe6? ♖f6! was the defensive idea that Topalov had in mind. Suddenly Black wins the f4-pawn.
**45...**♗**d2 46.e3 b4** Or 46...e5 47.♘f7+. **47.**♘**xe6** ♖**h5**



**48.**♘**xg7** 48.♘g5 ♖xh2 49.♖b8 looked like a win to me, until I realized that it is a hallucination: 49...♔g6! 50.♖b6+ ♔h5!.
**48...**♖**xh2** Now it's clear that White is winning. Moreover, there is a way to win the b4-pawn by force.
**49.**♘**f5+** ♔**g6 50.**♘**e7+** ♔**f6 51.**♘**d5+** ♔**e6 52.**♔**e4!** ♖**h3 53.**♖**b6+** ♔**d7 54.**♔**d3!**



**54...**♗**c1** Or 54...♗e1 55.♘xb4.
**55.**♖**xb4** ♔**d6 56.**♔**d4**
Black resigned.
I hope you enjoyed this game, although it is highly unlikely that you enjoyed it as much as I did. ■

**Stavanger 2015** — **cat. XXI**

| | | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | | TPR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Veselin Topalov | IGM | BUL | 2798 | * | ½ | ½ | 0 | ½ | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6½ | 2946 |
| 2 | Vishy Anand | IGM | IND | 2804 | ½ | * | ½ | ½ | ½ | 1 | ½ | 1 | ½ | 1 | 6 | 2904 |
| 3 | Hikaru Nakamura | IGM | USA | 2802 | ½ | ½ | * | ½ | 1 | ½ | ½ | ½ | 1 | 1 | 6 | 2904 |
| 4 | Anish Giri | IGM | NED | 2773 | 1 | ½ | ½ | * | ½ | ½ | 1 | ½ | ½ | ½ | 5½ | 2862 |
| 5 | Fabiano Caruana | IGM | ITA | 2805 | ½ | ½ | 0 | ½ | * | ½ | ½ | 1 | 0 | ½ | 4 | 2736 |
| 6 | Maxime Vachier-Lagrave | IGM | FRA | 2723 | 0 | 0 | ½ | ½ | ½ | * | ½ | ½ | 1 | ½ | 4 | 2745 |
| 7 | Alexander Grischuk | IGM | RUS | 2781 | 0 | ½ | ½ | 0 | ½ | ½ | * | 0 | ½ | 1 | 3½ | 2702 |
| 8 | Magnus Carlsen | IGM | NOR | 2876 | 0 | 0 | ½ | ½ | 0 | ½ | 1 | * | 1 | 0 | 3½ | 2691 |
| 9 | Levon Aronian | IGM | ARM | 2780 | 0 | ½ | 0 | ½ | 1 | 0 | ½ | 0 | * | ½ | 3 | 2657 |
| 10 | Jon Ludvig Hammer | IGM | NOR | 2677 | 0 | 0 | 0 | ½ | ½ | ½ | 0 | 1 | ½ | * | 3 | 2668 |

Infographic

# The Rise of China and India

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has remained the No. 1 country in the FIDE world rankings -- a result of the game's continuing popularity and the vestiges of the state support under the old Soviet regime.

But, in recent years, China and India have closed the gap with Russia and could soon overtake it. China and India seem to be following different paths -- what could be called the quality versus quantity approaches.

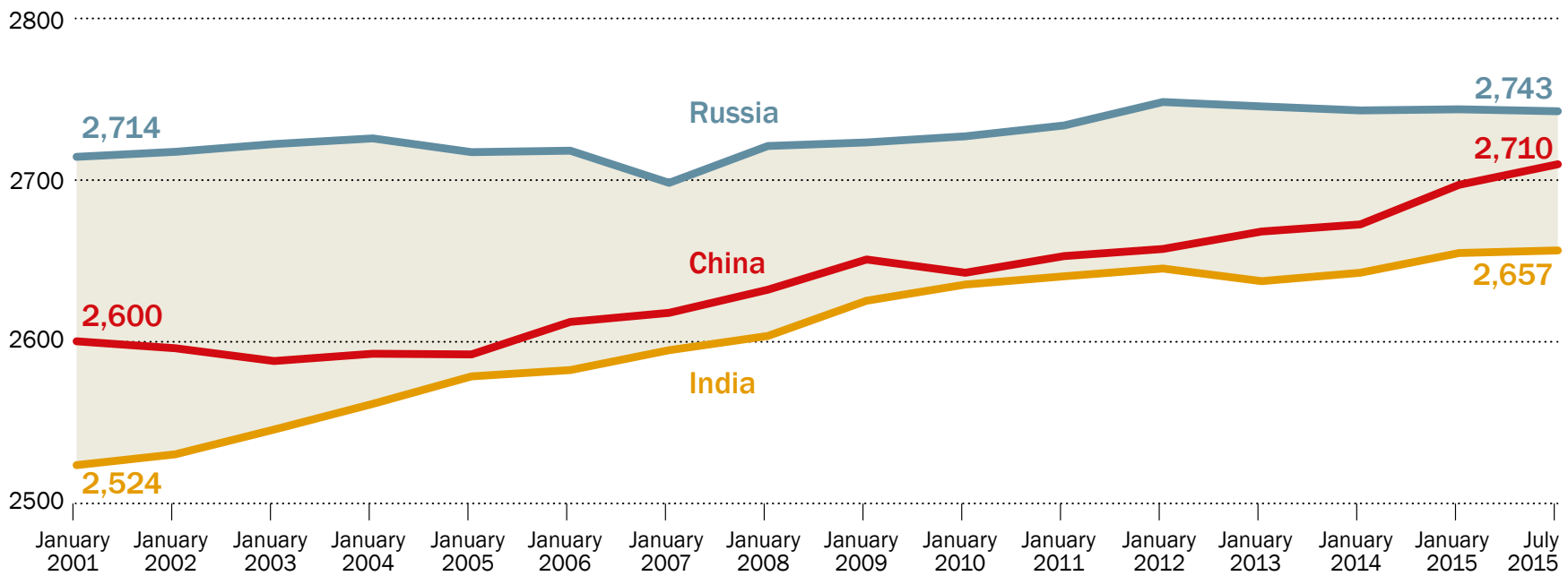
China has replicated the development system that existed in the Soviet Union, focusing on identifying talented players, putting them in training centers and getting them expert coaching.

India's development seems to be a reflection of widespread enthusiasm for the game, sparked by the success of Viswanathan Anand, the former world champion, who has also dedicated a great deal of his time to opening chess schools around the country.

*DYLAN LOEB McCLAIN*

## The Ratings Race

Average rating of the top 10 active players in each country

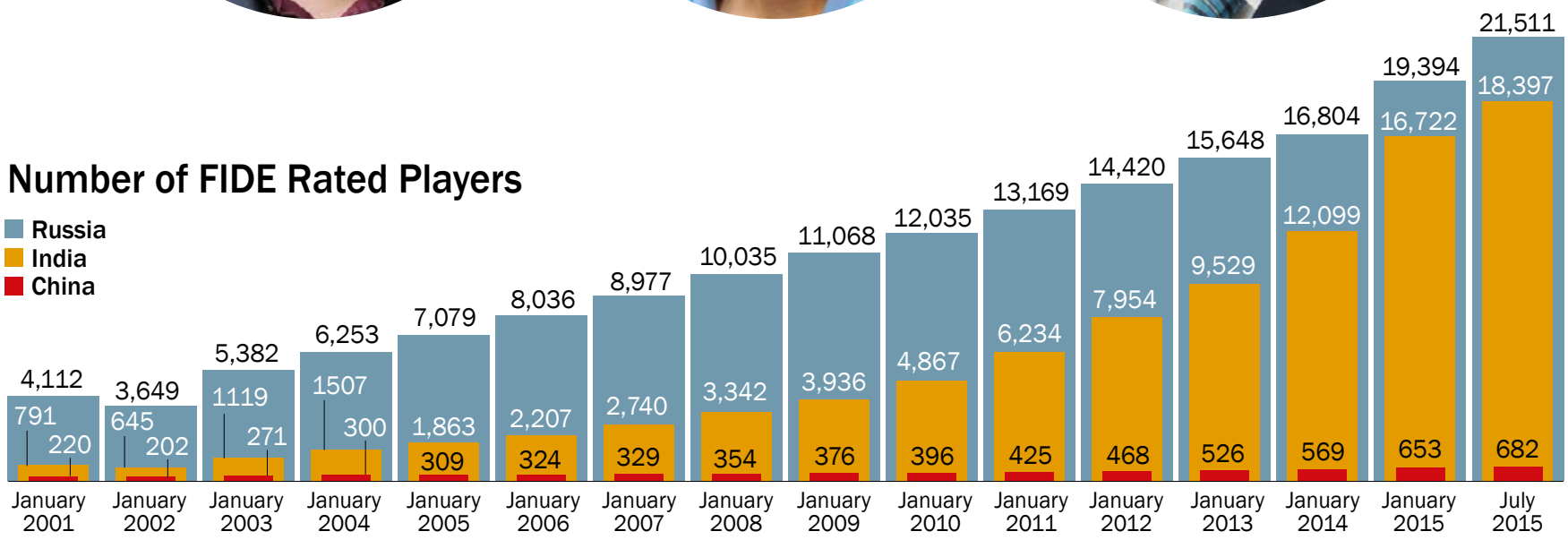



*Vladimir Kramnik of Russia, No. 7 in the world (July 2015)*

*Ding Liren of China, No. 14*

*Viswanathan Anand of India, No. 2*

## Number of FIDE Rated Players



# Fair & Square

**Alexander Beliavsky**: 'The computer can help find a good line, and then the task of the coach is to explain things in words, in clear human language. Of course, there are positions where it is useless to explain, because the position is purely tactical in nature – punch, kick, kick.'
*(The renowned coach interviewed by chess-news.ru)*

**Mig Greengard**: 'Not sure Magnus has been this far down on a table since he was crawling under one as an infant!'
*(On the disastrous ½/4 start by the World Champion in Norway Chess 2015)*

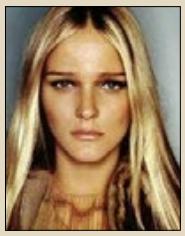
**Tim Hawking**: 'My father is hugely competitive and he certainly wasn't the easiest opponent at any game, particularly chess.'
*(Stephen Hawking's son during a new BBC documentary on life with the world's most famous physics professor)*

**Henry Bird**: 'When one plays with Morphy the sensation is as queer as the first electric shock, or first love, or chloroform, or any entirely novel experience.'

**Vladimir Kramnik**: 'I go to bed at 4 a.m., almost all chess-players do.'

**Sir John Simon**: 'Chess is a cold bath for the mind.'
*(The chess-loving British politician, who held several key cabinet posts between WWI & II)*

**Bruce Pandolfini**: 'We don't really know how the game was invented, though there are suspicions. As soon as we discover the culprits, we'll let you know.'



**Carmen Kass**: 'In life we make decisions and we have choices. Chess trains you to see through the head. You can make better choices, you can analyse good and bad, and you can see further. Life is a chain of command – basically, one thing leads to another, and if you make the wrong move, there are consequences.'
*(The supermodel and former president of the Estonian chess federation, in the August 2010 issue of Vogue)*

**Cecil Purdy**: 'Pawn endings are to chess what putting is to golf.'

**Ed Zwick**: 'Obviously, you could evoke "Raging Bull", which is an amazing study of someone who you would be hard-pressed to call sympathetic. But listen, more important than being sympathetic is that Fischer would be knowable. And that, in some way, was even harder, because he was introspective, he was self-contained in this way. To me, one of the most moving parts of the story is how isolated he was and how alienated he was, even in the midst of this international spotlight.'
*(The film director interviewed in Entertainment Weekly ahead of the European release of the Bobby Fischer movie, Pawn Sacrifice)*

**Svetozar Gligoric**: 'His fantasy was a torrent, which could not be dammed. I remember our games and the analysis afterwards. I regarded with disbelief the variations that (David) Bronstein considered during play. It was a fantastic world into which my cold reason, even had I been able, would never have entered.'

**Phil Hellmuth**: 'Today I played like a superstar. It's just so sick. I'm proud of the way I played. If this were chess I would have won the tournament.'
*(The Poker legend and "Poker Brat" after he fell short of capturing a record 15th bracelet in June's No-Limit Hold'em event at the 2015 World Series of Poker)*

**Walter Browne**: 'I want to compete whatever the risk, seek the truth whatever the price, and create no matter the challenge.'

**Ye Jiangchuan**: 'After a decade of hard work, now the Chinese male players have what it takes to win the pearl on the crown – the men's individual world title.'
*(The Chinese coach Ye Jiangchuan in the Shanghai Daily, after China won the World Team Championship)*

**Emanuel Lasker**: 'On the chessboard lies and hypocrisy do not last long.'

**Anatoly Karpov**: 'If only I had my duel with Fischer, my fighting level would be of a higher order. Once I had attained and mastered such a level – a level which for Kasparov is completely unattainable – I would have recalled it whenever necessary.'

**Magnus Carlsen**: 'Practice is your intuition, practice is your calculation, practice is everything.'

**Dominic Lawson**: 'Nothing excites jaded Grandmasters more than a theoretical novelty.'

# Queengrabber

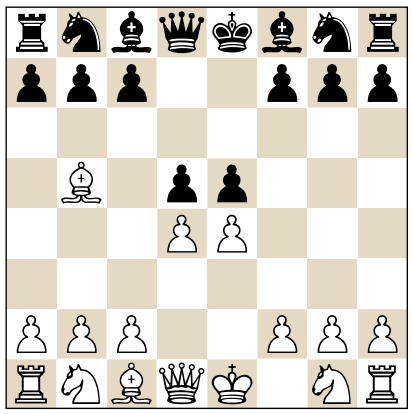
In his inspirational book *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, Tom Fürstenberg took on the role of the apprentice to enchantingly remind today's chess world of the genius of sorcerer David Bronstein. But just as 'Every chess master was once a beginner', so the Sorcerer himself was once an Apprentice – to the mysterious 'Queengrabber' who proceeded to exert a lifelong influence on him. **Jimmy Adams** tells a story filled with anecdotes and crammed with chess delight and brilliancies.

# Queen

'Queengrabber' may not have been a grandmaster or even a master, but he provided unflagging moral and material support to his friend David Bronstein in good times and bad. The two of them shared a richly artistic, creative and imaginative temperament, a love of literature, an impish sense of humour and a genuine desire to popularise chess, particularly among the younger generation. All these characteristics were very much in evidence when Bronstein, accompanied by Viktor Kortchnoi and Mark Taimanov, visited England in 1975/76. But first let's turn back the clock four decades to find out more about his friend…

■ ■ ■

Queengrabber first made an appearance in a 1936 issue of the Soviet chess newspaper *64*, with an article which included the following 'trap'.
**1.e4 e5 2.d4 d5 3.♗b5+**



'Here White failed to say check, Black did not notice his king was attacked and so carried on routinely with **3...a6**, the usual way of dealing with an enemy bishop on this square. But then came **4.♗g5++**. Now he *does* announce check – to the king *and* queen!! And after the obligatory **4... axb5** came **5.♗xd8**. Queengrabber!'

Silly stuff, you may say, but the author went on to write a great number of humorous and satirical articles, which were very popular in the days of the old USSR, where he became affectionately known as *Grossmeister Ferzbery* (GM Queengrabber). However, for many years hardly anyone knew who Queengrabber was. An official in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, later even a KGB colonel, he was a shadowy character to the chess world at large. Indeed, he maintained his extraordinarily low profile also when fulfilling the role of ghost writer, for David Bronstein, of one of the most highly acclaimed and best-selling chess books of all time – on the 1953 Candidates' tournament in

**Bronstein alfresco - Any David Bronstein simultaneous display or lecture proved extremely popular with the masses, drawing large crowds wherever he went.**

# grabber

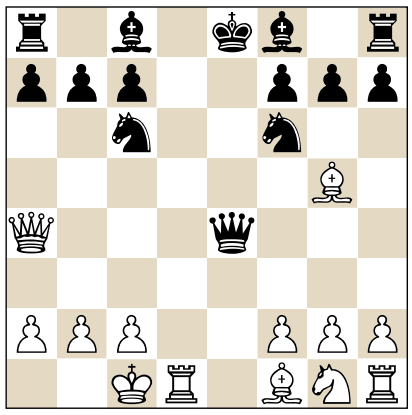
## and his inimitable apprentice

Zurich. Even in his 1970s classic, *200 Open Games,* Bronstein remained extremely cagey when mentioning his 'editor' – B.S. Queengrabber: 'In the spring of 1938 in Kiev, when I was only 14, I came across my chess teacher, A.M.Konstantinopolsky, talking to a tall gentleman outside the conservatory where the next round of the semi-finals of the national championship was due to be played. "I have to go now and play", said Konstantinopolsky to the stranger, "but you have a game with this little fellow here", and he pointed to me.' And the mystery man, who turned out to be none less than Queengrabber himself, duly checkmated the youngster in 15 moves, giving queen's rook odds and letting it be known, for good measure: "In the present circumstances, it is not Queengrabber but *King*grabber."'

Bronstein subsequently not only became close friends with Queengrabber but adopted his principles, as can be seen from this miniature…

**David Bronstein**
**A.N.Other**
Simultaneous display, Sochi 1950

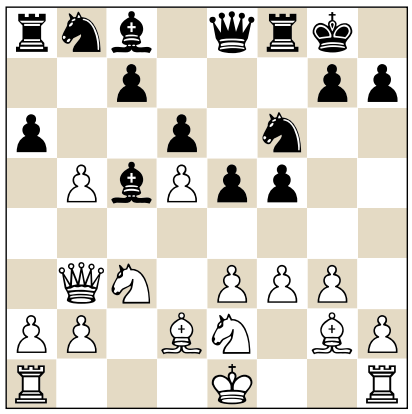
**1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.♕xd4 ♘c6 4.♕a4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 d5 6.♗g5 dxe4 7.♘xe4 ♕e7 8.0-0-0 ♕xe4**



**9.♖d8+!!** 9...♘xd8 is illegal while if 9...♔xd8 10.♕xe4 – Queengrabber!

■ ■ ■

Queengrabber even made his presence felt when, in 1951, Bronstein challenged Botvinnik for the World Championship. In the remarkable 9th game of the match, as Black, Bronstein had conjured up an ingenious, albeit flawed idea, allowing the fastest pawn promotion yet seen in a world title match.



**Botvinnik-Bronstein**
Moscow 1951, Game 9
position after 13.cxb5

**13...♗d7**

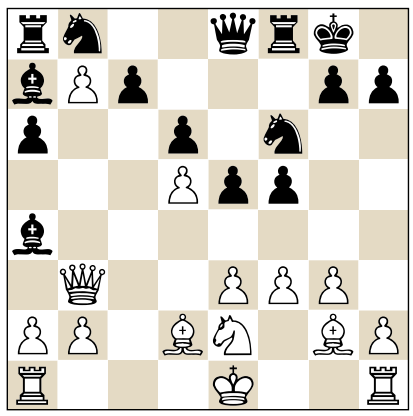
Later, Bronstein stated that 13...axb5 14.♘xb5 ♕f7 15.e4 fxe4 16.fxe4 ♘g4 would have retained his initiative.

**14.♘a4 ♗a7?**

The start of a miscalculation. According to Bronstein, even now 14…axb5 15.♘xc5 dxc5 16.d6+ ♔h8 offered 'excellent possibilities for Black… but who will condemn me for the fact that I wanted within the space of three moves to take into captivity *two* white queens…'

**15.b6 ♗xa4 16.b7**

'Similar combinations with the sacrifice of the queen and the promotion of a pawn occur not more than once in every ten years!'



**16...♗xb3**

'This is the position where four moves earlier Black planned the variation 16…♗b6 17.bxa8♕ ♗xd5. Everything is absolutely correct. Only it is now not Black's move, but *White's*, and the combination is transformed into an unsuccessful trick,' admitted Bronstein later.

**17.bxa8♕ ♗b6 18.axb3**

Black is now simply a rook down. However, there was an unexpected twist: Botvinnik became too complacent and, faced with resourceful play by his opponent, in the end only managed a draw!

■ ■ ■

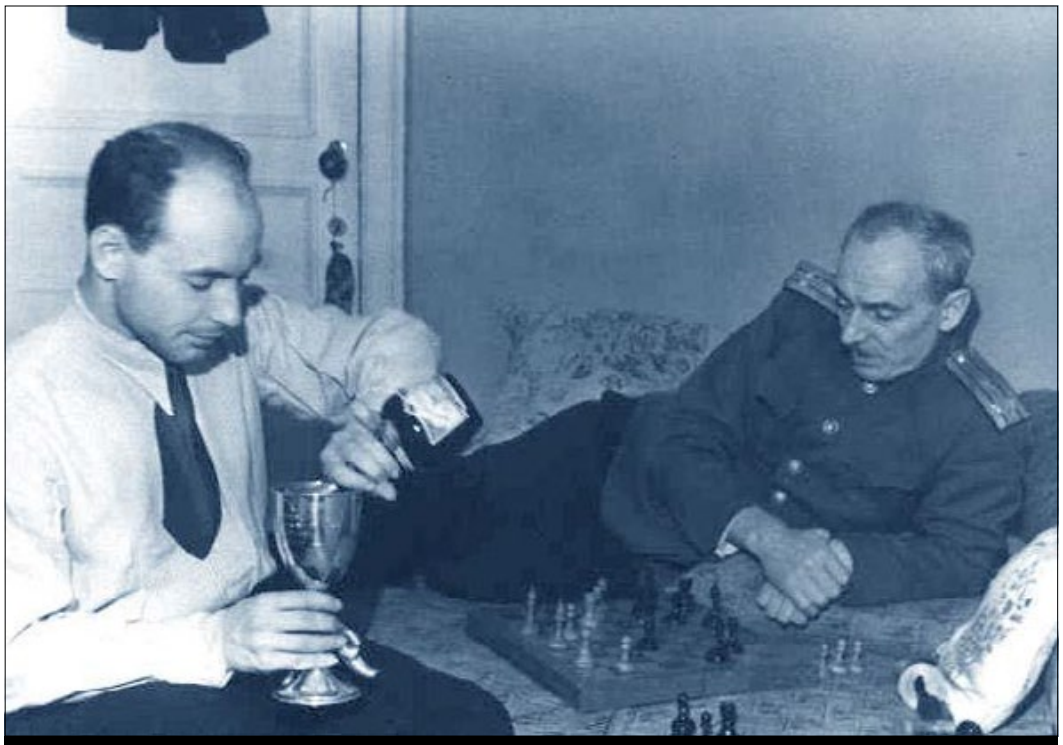
'The book got me into trouble after the Club Secretary had presented souvenir copies to each of the three visiting Soviet grandmasters.'

Now we fast-forward a quarter of a century, when the ever-imaginative Bronstein tied for first place at the Hastings Chess Congress 1975/76, leaving his colleagues Kortchnoi and Taimanov lower down the table. After the tournament, as was customary in those days, the Soviet grandmasters stayed on in the UK to give simultaneous exhibitions. But this particular visit turned out to be rather special… Firstly, there were three world class Russians, not the usual two, and secondly, they agreed also to take part in specially arranged 'rapidplays' – which were a novel concept at the time, but soon caught on like wildfire throughout the country. Bronstein had not only shown himself to be an enthusiastic advocate of 15-minute tournaments in the USSR, but had already introduced this same idea to England four months earlier. At that time, the chess publisher Batsford had organised a quickplay in Charlton, London, for players returning home from a strong grandmaster tournament in Teesside, in the North East of the country. Bronstein won this inaugural event, ahead of Jan Timman and Efim Geller.

On Bronstein's suggestion, two more rapid tournaments were staged. The first of these, a 15-minute all-play-all, was held at the London Central YMCA with Bronstein and Taimanov, but not Kortchnoi, who gave an exhibition instead.

I should mention here that the previous year I had brought out a book *K is for Karpov!*, which contained an analysis of the future world champion's style of play and also a big selection of his games, including those he had played four years earlier in a simultaneous display at the YMCA, where he suffered five defeats.

But the book got me into trouble after the Club Secretary had presented souvenir copies to each of the three visiting Soviet grandmasters. Bronstein was upset at my inclusion of a newspaper quote: 'Karpov provides a needed boost to the sagging



**David Bronstein pours himself a drink as he is playing a game against his friend Boris Weinstein, who to a large Soviet audience was known as the mysterious 'Queengrabber'.**

middle aged image of Russian chess', to which he took personal offence. His depth of feeling was illustrated by the fact that he gave away his copy, which was contrary to his custom of taking such gifts back home as a permanent memento of his travels around the world.

Kortchnoi was also none too pleased, but he responded to the middle-age quote by making a career out of defeating players half or even a quarter of his age! At that time, in view of his fantastic tournament record, I think he also felt that it was he who had the most rightful claim to ownership of the letter K – and the fact that it was his arch rival who had hijacked it only made matters worse. However, I should add that some thirty years later, when I asked Viktor if he really was angry, he gave me some reassurance with the words, 'I was, but not now'.

Yet, after all this, I now had to face Bronstein in the tournament. I thought he would slaughter me. But the game turned out to be a war of mutual attrition that went all the way down to king vs. king. When we shook hands at the end, there was no mention of the word 'Draw'. Instead Bronstein said, with typical irony, 'We have each spent 15 minutes capturing 15 chess pieces!'

Bronstein and Taimanov duly shared the first prize and I came joint third with the World U-18 champion, David Goodman.

The second double-round rapid-play, Young England v USSR match, was hosted by publishers Batsford at their London offices and sponsored by businessman Jim Slater, the same City financier who had rescued the Fischer – Spassky match in Reykjavik with his £50,000 contribution to the prize fund.

The final scores: Kortchnoi 5; Taimanov 4; Bronstein 3½; Stean 3; Goodman 2; Mestel ½. This was considered a success for Young England as Michael Stean scored wins against Bronstein and Taimanov, who in turn also suffered a defeat against David Goodman. I was one of half a dozen volunteers who kept score of the games as they were played. But what I remember most about the event was Kortchnoi finishing off a winning rook and pawn endgame against Stean, by *banging* down one zigzag

## Legendary innovator

David Ionovich Bronstein (1924-2006), born in Bila Tserkva in present-day Ukraine, was a Soviet giant and one of the most brilliant and innovative players of the 20th century. He was famous for his writing and for failing by a whisker to capture the World Championship title in 1951, when his match against Botvinnik finished in a 12-12 tie.

Bronstein injected fresh dynamism into chess throughout the 1950s, particularly with his handling of certain opening systems, e.g. the King's Indian Defence, which up to then had been thought to be an inferior opening. He was also a leading chess visionary, advocating speed competitions, and credited long before Bobby Fischer with using digital clocks to add a time increment after each move.

Bronstein's book *Zurich International Chess Tournament, 1953* (written together with Boris Weinstein, who could not be named for political reasons), and the aptly named *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* (in collaboration with Tom Fürstenberg), are regarded as two of the best books ever written on the game.

In his later years, Bronstein travelled widely and endeared himself to a younger generation with his hugely popular simultaneous displays and lectures, mainly held at local chess clubs. Bronstein is also immortalised in pop culture by being on the 'losing end' of arguably one of the most-viewed chess games ever, in the James Bond movie *From Russia with Love*, featuring the famous Spassky-Bronstein King's Gambit encounter from the 1960 USSR Championship.

move after another in a triumphant king march: ♔f7-e6-f5-e4-f4-e3. Yes, it was loud, very loud!

During these years, in the wake of the enormous publicity of the Fischer-Spassky match, the roots of the forthcoming 'English chess explosion' were being planted and a special chess day consisting of *five* simultaneous exhibitions, running simultaneously(!), was staged at Starcross School in Islington, North London. The participants were all juniors – 135 of them!

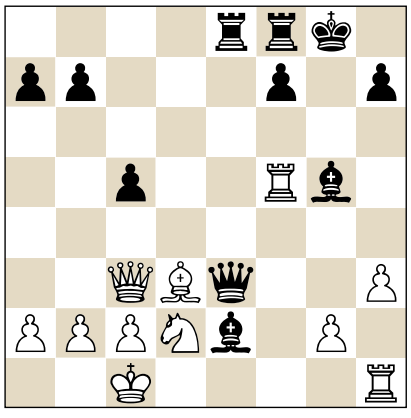
The event was driven by Leonard Barden, doyen of English chess columnists, who wanted to replicate the days of 1920s and 1930s Russia, when foreign grandmasters had such a hard time coping with the young Soviet juniors in simultaneous play.

The results on the day: Kortchnoi +20 =9 –1 and Bronstein +17 =9 –4.

Kortchnoi and Bronstein faced equally strong opposition, which included a number of future titled players. But whereas Bronstein intentionally played dare-devil chess, Kortchnoi placed an iron grip on his opponents, not wishing to suffer the fate of other Soviet grandmasters who had endured rather too many defeats against English juniors on previous visits to the UK. Moreover, to his great credit, Viktor generously gave each game his full attention, so that his young adversaries would know what it was really like to play against a strong grandmaster.

As it happened, Kortchnoi took about seven hours to complete his exhibition, which went on twice as long as the others! This left Bronstein with time on his hands, which he spent chatting to organisers, players and parents, and, towards the end of the day, even testing 10-year-old Nigel Short, the only junior to defeat Kortchnoi, to find the winning moves of an 'immortal zugzwang game' he had won against Julio Kaplan at the Hastings tournament.

'Whereas Bronstein intentionally played dare-devil chess, Kortchnoi placed an iron grip on his opponents.'



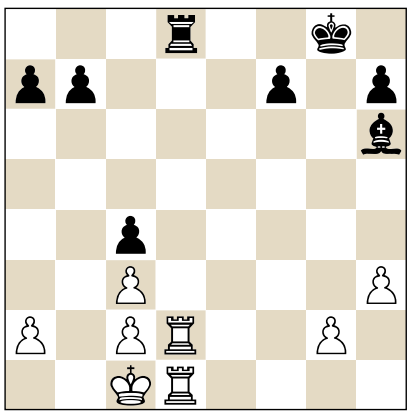
It is Bronstein (Black) to play and the following notes by him are taken from *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*.

**21...♗h6** Such a lovely bishop! If there had been a few even safer squares further back along the diagonal, I would have retreated him still further!

**22.♗xe2** If 22.♖e1 then 22...♕g3 23.♖xe2 ♕e1+, but now came a little surprise for White.

**22...♕xc3** I had half an hour left for 18 moves. Kaplan had a minute. I think he saw what was coming but wanted it demonstrated.

**23.bxc3 ♖xe2 24.♖d5 ♖xd2 25.♖xd2 ♖d8 26.♖hd1 c4**



White resigns.

A beautiful finish. When White runs out of pawn moves he will have to move his king and lose a piece.

■ ■ ■

And there was yet another Bronstein contribution to the day's proceedings. An hour or so after he had completed his exhibition, I saw him carrying in both hands a board and box of chessmen and leaving the main hall, accompanied by some of the younger juniors and their parents. Curious to see what he was up to, I followed the group to a nearby vacant office, which the caretaker had placed at Bronstein's disposal so that he could give a little tutorial to these weaker players who had taken part in the non-Soviet simuls.

As the kids took their seats around the table, I noticed, sitting right opposite the grandmaster, one boy I had never seen before. I learned later that his name was Terry Andrews and, even after all these years, I have never forgotten it. He lived locally, in Islington, but was not one of the competing juniors. I can still picture him: he looked about ten years old, had a Beatle haircut, a cheerful expression, and was wearing a bright red Arsenal football jersey. Indeed, Terry's mum said that her son's main interest was soccer and he only played chess with his dad at home. However, when passing by the school that day and noticing the sign on the entrance, 'To Chess Tournament', he couldn't resist coming inside to watch the players.

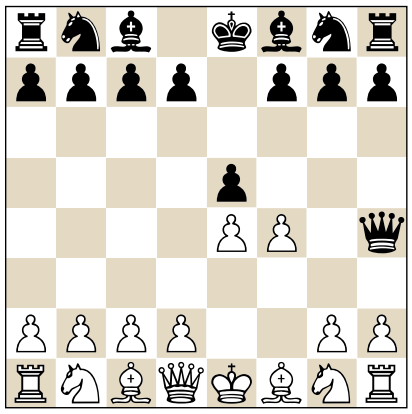
True to form, Bronstein gave his tutorial an original touch and invited the juniors to take part in an analysis of a couple of his losses! The first game he went through was his defeat against 17-year-old Mark Hebden, who of course later became a grandmaster himself.

King's Gambit
**David Bronstein**
**Mark Hebden**
Simultaneous Exhibition, London 1976

**1.e4 e5 2.f4 ♕h4+**

The Keene Variation, named after Ray Keene, who considers it to be one of his most important innovations. He discovered the line while a student at Cambridge in 1969, after

taking on the post of librarian/social secretary of the university chess club. Among the volumes dumped in his rooms was a dusty 19th century version of *Bilguer's Handbuch*, and after looking up the King's Gambit, he found 1.e4 e5 2.f4 ♕h4+ 3.g3 ♕e7 4.fxe5 ♕xe5 when Black is in a bad way. But Keene found the key innovation of 4...d6!!, which made the line playable again. He used it against Milner Barry in a county match, in a postal game and once at the 1974 Olympiad – and never lost with it.



**3.g3** After provoking this pawn to g3, any ...exf4 by Black will now leave ...fxg3 as a possibility.

**3...♕e7 4.♘c3! exf4**

4…d6 is too passive.

**5.d4** Bronstein may not have been too familiar with Black's crazy-looking second move but he wasn't going to subject himself to 5.gxf4 ♕h4+.

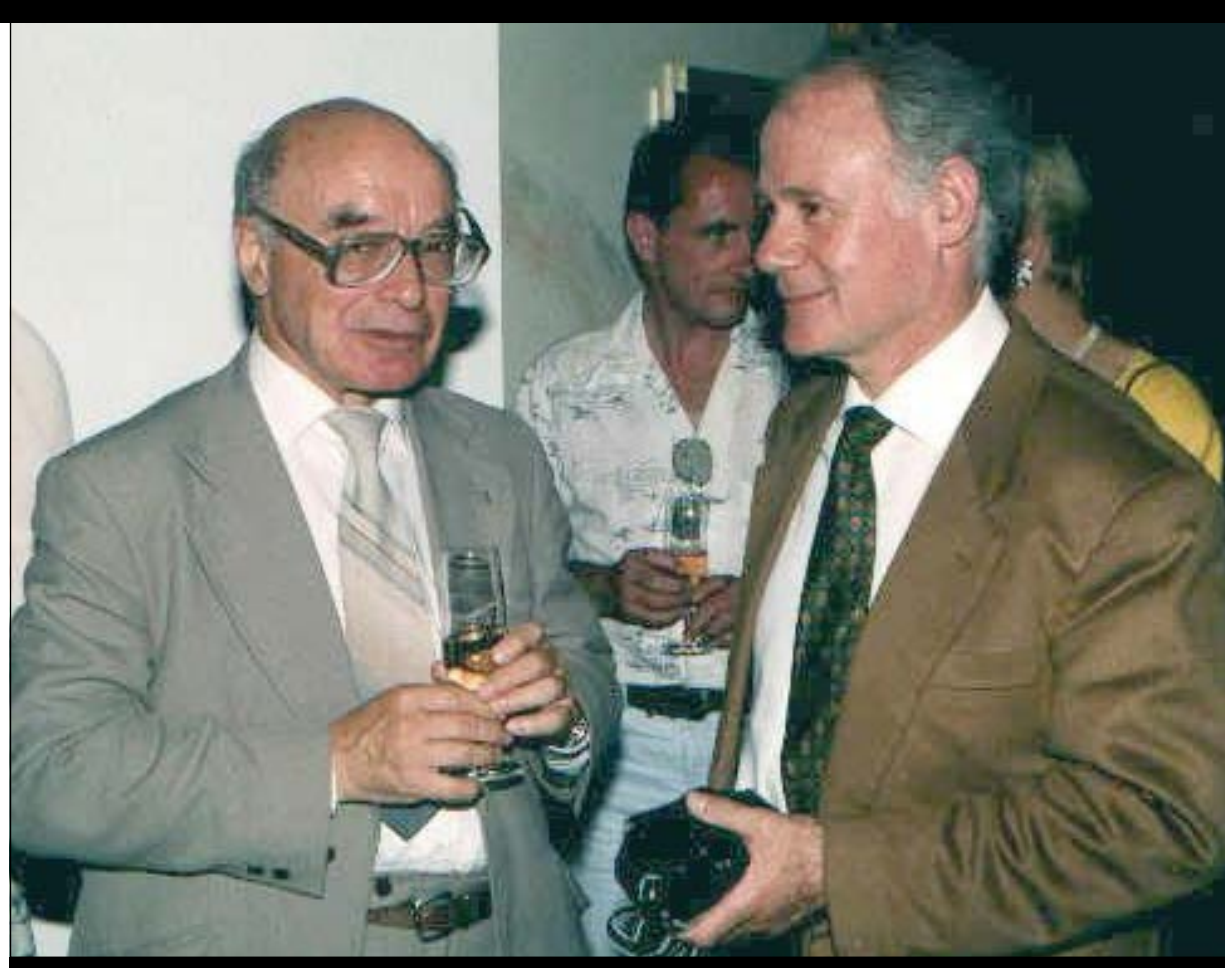
**5...fxg3** All according to plan.

**6.♗f4** 6.♘f3 and 6.♕f3 have also been successfully tried here.

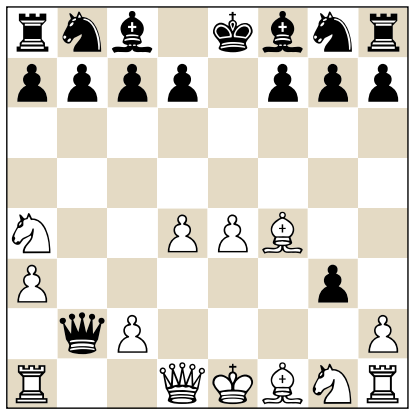
**6...♕b4** The Poisoned Pawn variation is usually seen in the Sicilian Defence – not in the King's Gambit! Among other possible replies for Black, in this rarely seen variation, are 6…d5, best met by 7.hxg3!, or 6…♘f6 7.e5 d6 8.♕e2!, as recommended by Joe Gallagher in his book on the opening.

**7.a3** Taking up the challenge.

**7...♕xb2 8.♘a4** On 8.♘b5, as a foretaste of what was to come, Bronstein mentioned the sacrifice 8…♕xb5 9.♗xb5 g2 10.♕f3 gxh1♕ 11.♕xh1 c6 when Black has rook, knight and two pawns for the queen.



**Sorcerer and Apprentice: David Bronstein and Tom Fürstenberg in Brussels in 1991.**



In showing his game, what soon became clear was that Bronstein was not the slightest bit interested in whether he came out on the winning side or not. Nor did he care if his analysis sometimes had shortcomings. He was only interested in challenging the juniors to find the neat tactics that lay hidden just below the surface in the arising positions, whether these favoured White or Black. The first question he asked was: '*Is Black's queen trapped?*'

**8...g2!**

No! Amazingly, a move right over the other side of the board allows him to keep a queen on the board. Mark Hebden had seen this resource in advance, but the juniors just moved the black queen to every vacant square in range, before finally giving up.

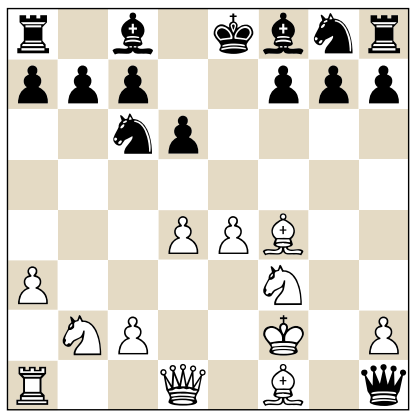
Interestingly, the quote describing the move 16.b7 in the Botvinnik-Bronstein game given earlier, also now suddenly becomes relevant!

**9.♘xb2** Bronstein looked only briefly at 9.♗xg2 ♕b5 10.♘c3 or 10.c4, protecting the knight on a4 with his queen, and providing a combined King's and Queen's Gambit effect. However, his real ambition lay elsewhere – he wanted to win the second queen too!

**9...gxh1♕ 10.♘f3 d6 11.♔f2**

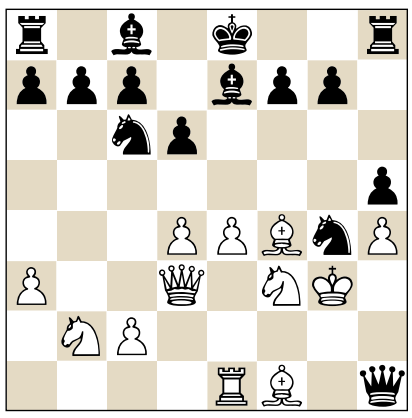
Prompting the second question: '*Why play this strange king move?*'

**11...♘c6** The most active way of preventing the threat of 12.♗b5+, with a discovered attack on the queen.

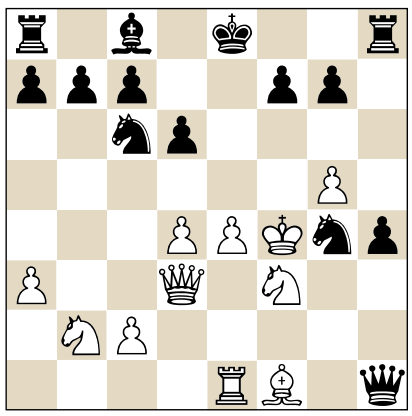


**12.d5** After proposing that White instead try 12.♕d3, Bronstein asked: '*And what if then 12...♗g4, threaten-*

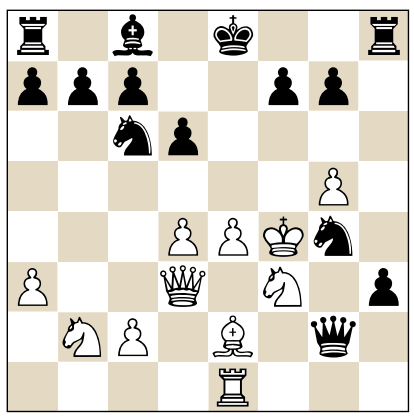
*ing …♕xf3+?'* However, nobody gave the answer he wanted, which was the surprising retreat 13.♘g1!, after which 14.♗g2 wins the queen. The fact that White must pay a price for it seemed immaterial to Bronstein. This was Operation Queengrabber!
Anyway, he then changed the moves on the board to 12…♘f6 13.♖e1, in order to win the queen by a move of the White king's bishop. Upon which, by mutual agreement, followed the continuation 13…♘g4+ 14.♔g3 h5 15.h4 (otherwise 15…h4+ 16.♘xh4 – 16.♔h3 ♘f2 mate – 16...♕xh2+ 17.♔f3 ♕f2 mate) 15...♗e7.



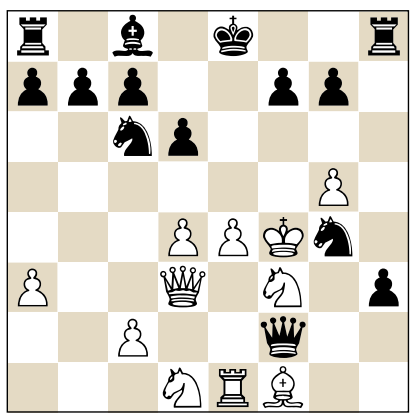
Now, after dealing with the juniors' suggestions of 16.♗h3, met by 16…♕xh3+! 17.♔xh3 ♘f2+; and 16.♕d2 met by 16…♗xh4+! 17.♘xh4 ♕g1+ 18.♕g2 ♕xd4, allowing the queen to escape, Bronstein suggested 16.♗g5, after which the youngsters had no difficulty in finding 16...♗xg5 17.hxg5 h4+ 18.♔f4 – avoiding 18.♘xh4 ♕h2+ 19.♔f3 ♕f2 mate.



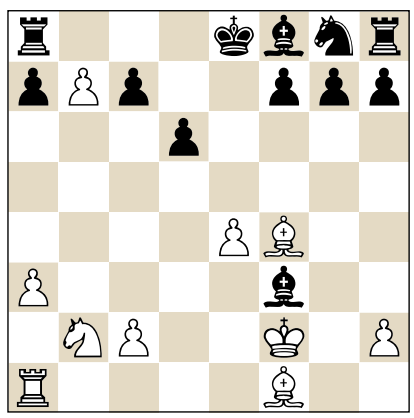
At this moment Bronstein asked: *'How can Black queen a second pawn on the corner square h1?'* The juniors needed more help with this one, but after 18…h3 19.♗e2 ♕g2



20.♖g1 they were amazed to discover that upon 20…♕xg1! 21.♘xg1 h2 the pawn cannot be stopped, and after 22.♘f3 h1, Black reclaims his queen.
And the tactics did not stop there. Without hesitation, Bronstein craftily altered White's 20th move to 20.♗f1, whereupon the juniors' spontaneous reply was 20…♕f2 and the question was posed: *'How can the white knight win its second black queen?'* Nobody had any trouble with that one: 21.♘d1!, since 21…♕g1 22.♘xg1 h2 no longer works because of 23.♗g2!, neutralising the pawn promotion. What a heroic knight – first it captures a queen on the queenside and then another on the opposite flank! Probably not since his game with Botvinnik had Bronstein had such an opportunity – only then, 25 years earlier, it was his *bishop* that was nominated for this rare honour. Super Queengrabber!
But the matter was not closed there. Bronstein asked: *'How can Black win his opponent's queen in return?'*

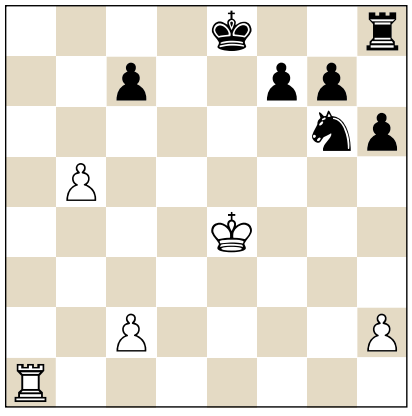


One of the juniors found 21…♘ce5!, but without at first realising just how good the move was, as it not only threatened the white queen, but also 22…♘g6 mate, and if 22.dxe5 dxe5 and Black checkmates! Alternatively, 22.♕b5+ c6 or 22.♘xf2 ♘xd3+ would leave Black greatly ahead in material.
It was like a magician pulling rabbits out of the hat, one after the other. When I got home that night I replayed and recorded what I could remember of the analysis, to preserve in writing what was a veritable junior master-class.
**12...♗g4** Saving the queen. Not 12…♘e5 13.♗b5+. From here on, Bronstein rattled off the remaining moves with minimum comment.
**13.dxc6 ♕xf3+ 14.♕xf3 ♗xf3 15.cxb7**



I had watched the simultaneous display as it was being played and noticed that after making this zwischenzug, Bronstein gave his opponent a quizzical look. However, deep in concentration, Mark's eyes never left the board. Afterwards, Bronstein made the astonishing admission that up to here, and indeed up to move 20, he was completely oblivious to the fact that he was a rook down, thereby somehow making all of this another curious echo of his game with Botvinnik.
**15...♖b8 16.♔xf3 ♖xb7**
So Black finally emerges the exchange and two pawns up.
**17.♘c4 h6** Visions of ...g5 and a bishop fianchetto? Bronstein gets busy with a counterattack.
**18.♘a5 ♖b2 19.a4** Preparing his

next. **19...♘f6 20.♗b5+ ♘d7 21.♘c6** Of course threatening ♘xa7 followed by an advance of the passed a-pawn. **21...a6** Diverting the bishop from b5 to remove the pin. **22.♗xa6 ♗e7 23.♗b5 ♗f6** Threatening ...♖xb5 with a discovered attack on the rook a1. **24.e5 dxe5 25.♘xe5 ♗xe5 26.♗xe5 ♖xb5 27.axb5 ♘xe5+ 28.♔e4 ♘g6**



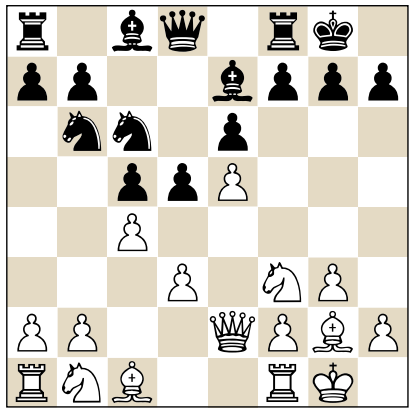
As Bronstein pointed out, his opponent needed to see this move beforehand, otherwise comes the skewer ♖a8+ and ♖xh8. **29.♖a8+** In this peculiar position, with the black king at last ready to castle, White could resign. But there comes one last 'spite check' – a final desperate display of defiance in a lost position. **29...♔d7 30.♖xh8** And a 'spite exchange' before giving up the fight. **30...♘xh8 31.h4 h5 0-1**

■ ■ ■

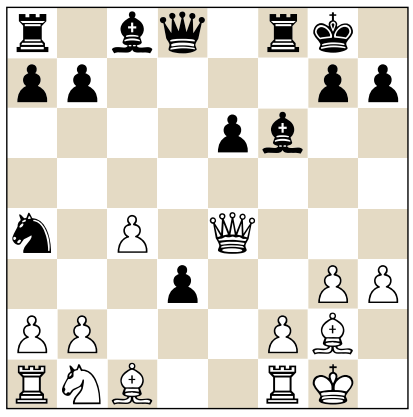
For the second game, Bronstein chose another of his losses. In this way I think he was effectively sending a message to the younger juniors, that they too could win games against grandmasters. This time he breezed through the moves with light comments, saving the best to last…

**David Bronstein**
**Tony Williams**
Simultaneous Exhibition, London 1976

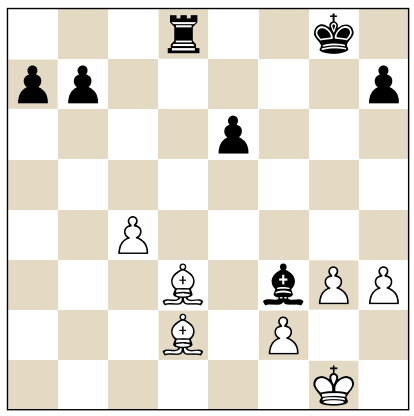
**1.e4 e6 2.d3 d5 3.♕e2** This offbeat Chigorin move was a favourite of Bronstein, even in international tournament play. **3...♗e7 4.♘f3 ♘f6 5.g3 0-0 6.♗g2 c5 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.e5 ♘d7 9.c4** Typical for the ♕e2 variation. The pawn thrust exerts pressure on the central d5-square. **9...♘b6** Blocking the centre by 9… d4, as in an important game, Smyslov-Gligoric, Amsterdam Interzonal 1964, allowed White to calmly build up in standard King's Indian Attack fashion with h4, ♖e1, ♘bd2.



**10.♘c3** This gets him into trouble, as the knight soon becomes a target. Against Dzindzichashvili, in the 1972 USSR Championship, Bronstein had played 10.♗f4 ♗d7 11.h4, when 11…♘d4, as in the present game, was answered by 12.♘xd4 cxd4 13.♘d2. **10...f6! 11.exf6 ♗xf6 12.h3** Another mistake which loses material. 12.♖e1, 12.♘d2, or 12.♖d1 would anticipate any activity on an opened d-file. **12...♘d4! 13.♘xd4 cxd4 14.♘b1** White is now in difficulties, e.g. 14.♘d1 dxc4 15.dxc4 d3 16.♕e4 (16.♕f3 ♘xc4) 16...d2 wins for Black. **14...dxc4 15.dxc4 d3 16.♕e4** To keep the c4-pawn covered. **16...♘a4**

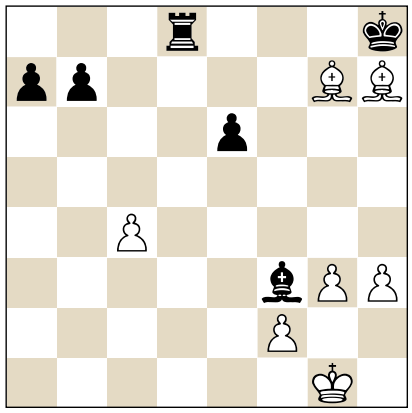


**17.♘d2 ♘xb2 18.♖b1 ♘a4** Now the exchange is lost due to the agile knight being able to go to both c3 and c5. **19.♖b3 ♘c5 20.♕e1 ♘xb3 21.axb3 ♕b6 22.♗a3 ♖d8 23.♘e4** A last attempt at a retaliatory attack. **23...♕xb3 24.♘xf6+ gxf6 25.♗e7 d2** Very strong. **26.♕d1 ♕xd1 27.♖xd1 ♖d3** Accurately calculated. **28.♗xf6 ♗d7** The point – to go to a4 where it strikes the queening square. **29.♗e4 ♗a4 30.♗xd3 ♗xd1 31.♗g5 ♗f3 32.♗xd2 ♖d8**



**33.♗xh7+** Another spite check, after which, in the actual game, the king took the bishop and White immediately resigned. But, in this 'post mortem', Bronstein now asked Terry Andrews to take command of the black pieces as he wanted to play on further! **33...♔xh7** Well, the kid may only have played chess with his dad, but as he had already shown in the 'question and answer' sessions, he knew how to move the pieces and make captures, and a little more besides…
However, unexpectedly, Bronstein challenged the legitimacy of this particular capture: 'Would you strike a bishop, a man of the church?' he asked. Upon which Terry seemed a bit taken aback but out of respect for the grandmaster – as well as the clergy – raised no objections and instead just moved away his king: **33...♔g7**. To which the reply was **34.♗h6+**. The kid didn't need telling twice and this time made no attempt to capture but got out of check by **34...♔f7**. Then followed **35.♗g6+ ♔g8** On

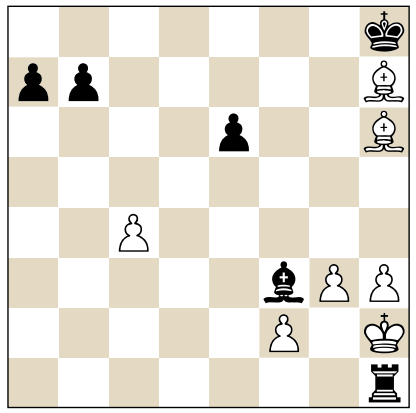
35…♔f6, follows 36.♗g5+, I suppose, winning the rook. **36.♗h7+ ♔h8** Seeking shelter from the checks, but… **37.♗g7** 'Bishop mate!' announced Bronstein.



Terry's cheerful expression was suddenly transformed into one of gloom. But then another junior came to his rescue and boldly stood up to tell Bronstein in no uncertain terms: 'You've broken the rules! Both bishops can be captured. It's not checkmate!'

'Another junior came to his rescue and boldly stood up to tell Bronstein in no uncertain terms: 'You've broken the rules!'

Far from dismissing this appeal, the quick-witted Bronstein then retracted his last move, turned to Terry and, glancing at his Arsenal jersey, conceded: 'The referee says I have committed a foul. Free kick to you!' Suddenly the youngster's face lit up, he was now in his element and, keeping his eye firmly on the h1-square, unleashed **37…♖d1+** whereupon a late dive by the king, **38.♔h2**, failed to stop the ball powering into the bottom right hand corner of the net, **38…♖h1** mate. Not even David Beckham could bend a ball like that.



Actually I think Bronstein was rather taken by surprise at the force and speed with which the last minute winner was delivered. 'Very good,' he said, congratulating the young striker, 'You are a real sportsman!'

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I never saw the kid's name mentioned again in the chess world – nor as a member of one of the Arsenal teams. But 'When David met Terry' remains vividly in my chess memories.

Incidentally, Tony Williams later gave up competitive chess but his younger brother, Simon, of course, is today one of the UK's top chess grandmasters and, like Bronstein, a highly imaginative player and populariser of the game amongst club players, as shown by his lively books, videos and lectures.

■ ■ ■

**A young Julian Hodgson (12) and Nigel Short (10) take on Viktor Kortchnoi during a famous 1976 London simultaneous display against promising English starlets. After seven hours, Kortchnoi's only loss was to Short.**

A few months after his visit to London, Kortchnoi defected to the West. Unlike practically all the other Soviet grandmasters, Bronstein refused to sign a letter of condemnation, as demanded by the USSR Chess Federation, and as a result he was punished by not being allowed to travel abroad, thereby damaging his career.

Consequently, the next time I saw him was not until 1989, which of course was a period of great change in the Soviet Union and other Eastern bloc countries. He had been invited to play in a couple of tournaments in London, making it his first competitive chess in the West since his previous visit here in the seventies.

In this same year, Mike Sheehan, a London book dealer and publisher, brought out under Caissa Books an English edition of *Isaac Boleslavsky: Selected Games*, which I had translated and expanded from the original Russian version.

This book appealed to me not only because of the quality of its games and annotations, but also because Bobby Fischer had learned so much from studying it, especially how to play the Ruy Lopez as White and the King's Indian as Black. There was the story that, when 12 years of age, he had borrowed this book from a friend, and after returning it a few months later, said he was 'very disappointed' with it as he had 'found two errors.'

In the meantime, the English version was honoured with the British Chess Federation's 'Book of the Year' award. However, it is time for me to own up. When Mike, a good strength club player, read the proofs, prior to printing, he only found one of the two 'errors' – so somewhere in its pages, on the good authority of Robert J. Fischer, there remained one uncorrected analytical mistake… It was only two years ago that the mystery was finally solved, when chess journalist Harald Fietz told me that whilst using the book for chess training purposes he had discovered a neat back rank mate that Boleslavsky – but evidently not Bobby – had overlooked!

So, what is the relevance of all this, you ask? Well, it was at Mike's shop, near London's fashionable Bond Street, that I met Bronstein again. But this time he was accompanied by his wife, Tatiana – the daughter of Isaac Boleslavsky! And the fact that both of them were happy to autograph copies of my book pleased me greatly, as it somehow made amends for the *K is for Karpov!* fiasco.

Later on, I showed the couple around the old City of London. What impressed Bronstein the most was a small churchyard not far from St Paul's Cathedral, where City workers go at lunchtime to drink their tea and eat their sandwiches. In the book *Secret Notes* by Bronstein and Voronkov there is a quite detailed coverage of the latter years of Bronstein's life, when he was continually travelling around Europe, and Tatiana writes movingly about our sight-seeing trip: 'In the very centre of London the chess journalist Jimmy Adams showed us a small and very old 14th or 15th century church, hidden away somewhere, on the outside wall of which hang large memorial plaques with the names of people who have sacrificed themselves in order to save others. Nearly all of them are ordinary people: mechanic, postman, nurse etc. This mournful list affected David very strongly, because he is the same kind of person.'

■ ■ ■

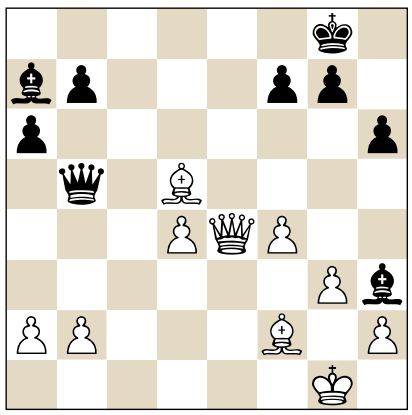
Now, finally, we return to Queengrabber.

In due course, chess writer Boris Samoilovich Wainstein dropped some very strong hints in his articles and books, particularly *David Bronstein Chess Improviser,* that it was he who was not only Queengrabber, but also the man who had looked after the interests of his protégé for so many years. Readers may recall that Genna Sosonko writes about this in detail in his revealing article 'The Man Behind the Curtain' in New In Chess 2011/6.

In 1960, Wainstein brought out *Opening Combinations and Traps,* essentially a book for young readers, full of light-hearted chess stories, interlaced with practical ways to catch out the opponent in the early stages of the game. Throughout its pages, there is an ongoing dialogue between two school friends, encouraged to improve their chess by an old-timer they meet in the park – Mr. Queengrabber, no less.

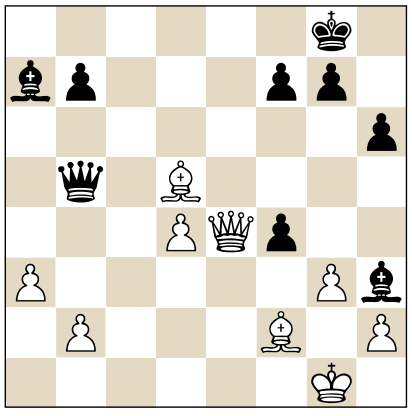
The book was a smash hit in the USSR where the 58,000 print run proved to be insufficient to meet demand and a second edition, this time of 93,000 copies, followed in 1965, as a result of which it outsold even classic works by Botvinnik and Keres.

As a rare exception to the prevailing theme of opening traps, there is also an article, based on the following *middlegame* position, taken from the Flohr–Grob match, played in Arosa 1933.



In the actual game White resigned here, but, as reported widely at the time, he could instead have won by playing **1.♔h1!**, in order to meet the threatened mate by ♕f1 with an interposition of the bishop on g1.

However, when Queengrabber published the position, it appeared like this:



Moreover it was stated that years later Bronstein had made a discovery. Black would have won after **1.♔h1 ♕f1+ 2.♗g1**, by **2...♗xd4!** Threatening 3...♕xg1 mate. **3.♕xd4** Thus the queen is deflected from its protection of the f3-square. **3...f3!** threatening 4...♗g2 mate. Now, after 4.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 5.♕d5+ ♔g6 6.♕d6+ ♔h7, Black's king escapes the checks and he wins. Bronstein then supposedly showed the line to Flohr, who replied: 'There, you see, you've doubtless been thinking about this for six years, whereas I resigned straight away.'

In the 1990s, whilst Bronstein was living in England – where, incidentally, he was more than happy to take part in London League chess and weekend tournaments with amateur players – I sought an explanation from him about the discrepancy. I did not get a straight answer. Not that this was anything unusual, as, when embarking on a conversation with Bronstein, you would more often than not find it going in a direction you didn't expect or want it to go, and your original questions had got lost along the way. For example, when I broached the subject of his 1953 Candidates' Tournament book, he closed it down with one word: 'Wainstein'.

Then again, his enigmatic response to my query over the position of the pieces was simply: *'We were just fooling around'* and he left me to figure out the rest by myself.

I then discussed this with Ken Neat, who referred me to examples of Bronstein's 'what if?' tendency. I came to the conclusion that Wainstein had originally set up the position of the Flohr-Grob game correctly (apart from the minor detail that White's a-pawn should have been on a2, not a3) and shown it to Bronstein. But, with his imagination running wild, the Sorcerer then picked up the black a6-pawn and used it to 'capture' the white f4-pawn, after which the checkmating possibilities for Black suddenly emerged.

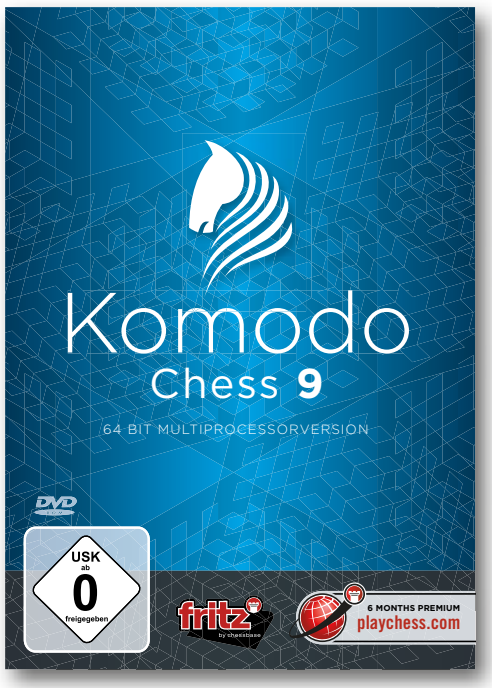
The altered position was then republished as *fact* by various foreign chess writers, who even made further adaptations of their own to the accompanying story line.

Though Queengrabber never made a clear statement about the true course of events, he did make an indirect 'confession' in the third edition of his book. This came out in 1990, and, at 190 pages, was double the size of its predecessors and had the far more intriguing title *Traps of the Queengrabber* – and a print run of 100,000!

Here, Queengrabber admitted that his writing style was heavily influenced by the philosophy *'The truth, but not the whole truth and not only the truth'* – which explains a lot! Moreover, Queengrabber had now added a footnote to the article in question, stating that before publication he had asked Flohr if there was anything in the 'story' he didn't approve of. To which Flohr replied: 'What do you mean, Boris? This is publicity for me!'

Incidentally, the unresolved mystery has been bugging the mighty chess historian Edward Winter for many years and so this is my attempt to lay it to rest once and for all. ■

# NEW!

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Komodo is primarily known for superb positional play. Of course it is also one of the the top few engines in tactical strength, but the programmers have not been willing to sacrifice positional play just to score better on tactical problem sets. All good engines are far stronger tactically than any human player, but when positional judgment is involved, top grandmasters are still superior. Therefore it makes sense to emphasize positional play rather than tactical skill; it is better to improve one's weakest point rather than just to further improve the strongest feature.

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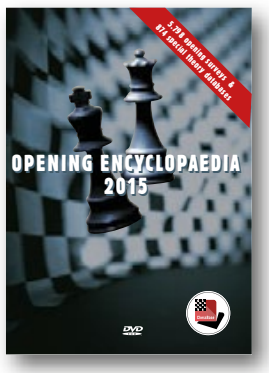


The new ChessBase Opening Encyclopedia 2015 is an excellent tool to close holes in your repertoire or to add new ideas, traps, or lines to your repertoire. There are more games and more annotated games than ever – 83,500 of the 5.3 million games are annotated. Among the top commentators are: Vishy Anand, Levon Aronian, Magnus Carlsen, Fabiano Caruana, Pavel Eljanov, Sergei Karjakin, Vladimir Kramnik, Boris Gelfand, Peter Leko, Teymour Radjabov, to name just a few! On top of that the Opening Encyclopedia 2015 offers a unique collection of all 874 ChessBase Magazine opening surveys up to CBM #164. This collection created by masters is particularly helpful for club players because these surveys give easy and fast access to the openings and their current theory. The surveys first give a written overview of the most important moves and then illustrates the ideas with annotated master games. The ChessBase Opening Encyclopedia 2015 also offers a clear and comprehensive access to opening knowledge: for each of the 500 openings covered by the international ECO standard key there is at least one opening survey, by now almost 5,800. Many of the authors are renowned opening specialists and have been analysing the development of their lines for many years, e.g. for the ChessBase Magazine. Among them are many well-known theoreticians such as Avrukh, Grivas, Krasenkow, Kritz, Kuzmin, Marin, Moskalenko, Postny, Ribli, Rogozenco, Stohl etc.

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# Resilient Caruana takes Dortmund again

With his third win in four years, Fabiano Caruana is reshaping the image of a tournament that seemed to be owned by Vladimir Kramnik. Following an inauspicious start, the 'born-again' American looked in trouble until he lashed out with a five-game winning streak. A 'mini-Caruana', if you will.

**Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam**

DAGOBERT KOHLMEYER

**Fabiano Caruana arrived in Dortmund on the day that he officially switched back from the Italian to the American chess federation. The first photo shows that by Round 3 the organizer had not yet managed to adjust the nameplate next to his board. The second photo is the solution the press chief came up with when he sent out a report with photos that same day.**

When the last moves of Norway Chess 2015 had been made, most of the participants were looking forward to getting some rest. The one exception was Fabiano Caruana, who was not longing for a break at all, but wanted to continue playing to get a lacklustre performance out of his system. Fortunately for him, he didn't have to wait long, as he immediately travelled on to Dortmund where, 45 hours after his last move in Stavanger, he sat down to play his first game in the Sparkassen Chess Meeting.

Caruana didn't even have time to attend the prize-giving in Stavanger, a dinner with live music one day after the fights on the chess board had come to an end. He bid farewell to the tournament in the early morning of that day after playing Bughouse in the bar of the Scandic Forus hotel till late. Looking back on his victory in Dortmund, Caruana felt that he already was getting rid of his 'Norway Chess blues', as he was unwinding after the last round with his colleagues. 'I already forgot about Norway during the Bughouse. I did very well. One of my best performances. I played most of the time with Aronian, so that explains some of the success, but then I switched and played with Maxime and we beat Levon and Grischuk.'

The journey from Stavanger to his next destination was not too complicated. A short flight to Copenhagen, a connecting flight to Düsseldorf and from there to Dortmund by car. He didn't even mind that on his arrival he was immediately taken to a one-hour press conference. After all, he would soon play chess again. And it was a special day. On that June 26th he officially switched from the Italian to the American chess federation and again represented the United States.

The next day, his first opponent at the Orchesterzentrum NRW was Ian Nepomniachtchi. 'I didn't know what to expect. Ian was coming from a much longer trip than mine, from Cuba (the Capablanca Memorial – DJtG). He played this g3 Grünfeld again and I think I had a pretty decent advantage, but after the game I could not find any way that could have caused him real problems. A draw was a more or less normal result.'

And not a bad result either if you play with the black pieces. But in the next round he got a cold shower. Once again, as if the opening is jinxed, he lost against Wesley So in a Najdorf with the white pieces.

'This was just a terrible game, one of the worst games I have played in quite a while. I had a very nice position out of the opening… (Sighs) This really has nothing to do with the opening. It's strange, but it's just a long series of coincidences. Sometimes I play the Najdorf and I lose in an equal endgame, like against Dominguez (Makedonia Palace 2013). Or against Nakamura (Zurich 2015), in a better endgame. (Laughs) I mean, it's just bizarre. That continued for some reason. It wasn't even that I missed

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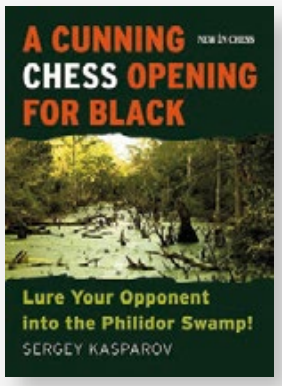


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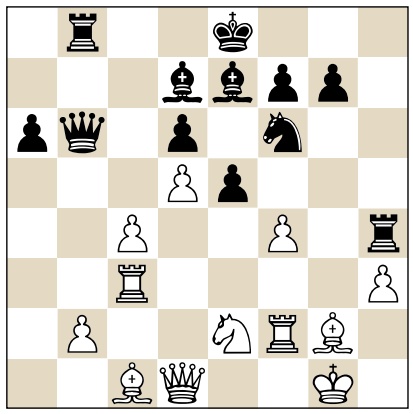
a very good winning chance out of the opening, but I don't think that he played the endgame very well.'



**Caruana-So**
Dortmund 2015 (2)
position after 19...♗d7

'I wanted to play 20.c5, which was probably winning or close to winning. I calculated it and it didn't look very clear at the end. I wanted to make some sort of consolidating move and played 20.b3, missing 20...♗xh3. It was all miscalculated from beginning to end. But it doesn't have to do with the opening. At some point I had a clear draw. Then I had a few minutes to decide on two moves, so I chose wrong. What can I say about this game? It was really not a good one.'

With half a point from two games, his smooth 5½ from 7 victory from last year seemed an echo from a distant past. By winning his last five games he could still equal that score, but that thought never crossed his mind. He needed some luck and he got plenty of it in his third game against Meier. 'I just wanted to get any kind of game, so I played 1…d6 and 2…g6; what else can you do? Wesley So played classical chess against him later on, but had no chances. Meier is quite a good player and he plays solid moves, so you have to do something special against him to win. (Laughs) In this case something special turned out to get a losing position. I was completely losing for a number of moves, but in time-trouble he squandered all his advantage and then, after the time-control, I already felt that I was better. He was quite demoralized at that point and didn't put up much resistance. This was a turning point in the tournament.'

His lucky win against Meier was followed by a good win against Arkadij Naiditsch and a pivotal defeat of Mr. Dortmund, Vladimir Kramnik. The ten-time winner had suffered a painful loss in Round 1 against Naiditsch, but then retaliated with three wins in a row against Hou Yifan, Nepomniachtchi and Meier.

'This was an important game, because he was the leader and after that I took over the lead.

'He was just too ambitious. He felt he was better after the opening and missed queen c3 after knight d2 (see Caruana's notes to this game – DJtG). Then later in the game, when I had lost most of my advantage, he also felt that he was close to winning. Objectively, I was never in any danger and when he made a few mistakes I took over. It feels like he wasn't in good shape.'

Suddenly Caruana was on a roll. He also proved too strong for Hou Yifan and the early leader Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu. With a 'mini-Caruana' of 5/5 he equalled his score of last year and won Dortmund for the third time. 'Last year was just a very smooth victory. I started with 2 out of 2, made a few draws, beat Adams, beat Meier, it ran like clockwork. This year was very different. I am happy with both victories. I don't think I am more proud of one than of the other. Maybe I prefer something cleaner in general, where I control the tournament from start to finish. But this was a nice comeback, and five wins in a row; it's never easy, especially to beat Kramnik with black. From these five games I had three blacks. I am also quite proud of this winning streak.'

In his last game, he failed to be impressed by Nisipeanu's Evans Gambit. As you will see in his notes to that game, Caruana holds a sobering view on this romantic invention.

'Yeah, I just have to tell how it is. I'd like to be able to play these openings, but they've become too worked out. I am not sure why he chose the Evans Gambit. He's played it a number of times, but actually I didn't even consider it before the game, I thought it was unrealistic. I didn't even repeat anything I had in my files, although there's nothing to remember (laughs). The way I played was the way Vishy (Anand) recently played against Nakamura. I won't say too much, but this is not the way to play for a win. It sounds strange, because you'd think that it's something like the King's Gambit, some romantic opening sacrificing a pawn, but it's just… I would say that if you're in a position that you have to win a game you should play something a bit more solid.'

Last year in Dortmund Caruana produced a brilliant combination against Ponomariov (see New In Chess 2014/6), and this time the conclusion of the game against Nisipeanu was of equal beauty. Immediately after the game the winner tweeted: 'That was my Ortueta-Sanz'. When comparing his play to this famous predecessor he discovered a lot of facts that were new to him, in particular the game Tylkowski-Wojciechowski, which saw the same combination (all this is described in great detail by the king of chess curiosities, Tim Krabbé – http://timkr.home.xs4all.nl/chess/rxb2.htm). 'It seems unlikely that two games were played around the same period with the same combination. And the same configuration of pieces on the queenside. So one of them is probably a duplicate or maybe they are both faked. But mine was real!'

With his win in Dortmund Caruana gained 11.3 rating points and took his rating over 2800 again. His main goal now is the Candidates' tournament early next year, but he wants to show his best in every tournament he is going to play in, to begin with the Sinquefield Cup in Saint Louis. Although he has already qualified for the Candidates' tournament, his trainer Vladimir Chuchelov and his new manager Lawrence Trent have persuaded him to include the World Cup in Baku in his schedule as well. 'I was not sure of it, but everyone else convinced me that it is a good idea. It's just a good tournament to play and the knock-out system is also interesting; a different type of experience.'

Following his federation change, he intends to spend more time in the U.S., where he and Trent have 'been working on some stuff'. On the day we talked he received a press release announcing that he will be a Visiting Grandmaster at Liberty Science Centre in Jersey City. 'They like chess. They were involved in the blindfold exhibition of Magnus (see New In Chess 2015/4 – DJtG). And one of the CEOs of the Liberty Science Center I have known for many years, Paul Hoffman, he is a chess lover.'

According to the press release, he is supposed to work alongside David Blaine, who is Visiting Magician at the Liberty Science Center, a prospect that Caruana finds exciting. 'I used to watch a lot of his street magic videos. I have a fascination with magic. Not performing it, but watching it, trying to figure out how they do it. So that's something I am looking forward to. It will be even better to watch it live.'

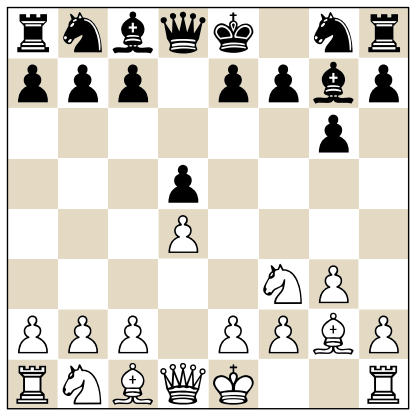
> 'Maybe I prefer something cleaner in general, where I control the tournament from start to finish.'

NOTES BY
**Fabiano Caruana**

GI 2.4 – D78
**Vladimir Kramnik**
**Fabiano Caruana**
Dortmund 2015 (5)

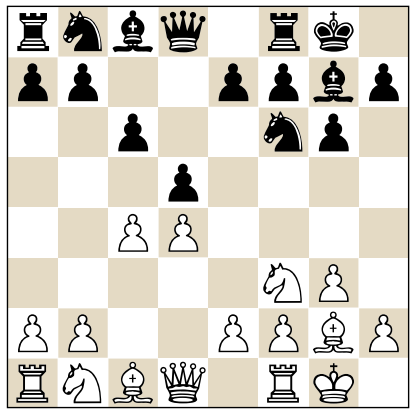
Before this game, I had just managed to avoid a complete disaster by turning around a lost position against Meier in Round 3, and then with another win in the 4th round I was on +1, half a point behind Nisipeanu and Kramnik. This game, therefore, would go a long way toward deciding the final standings.

**1.♘f3 d5 2.g3 g6 3.♗g2 ♗g7 4.d4**



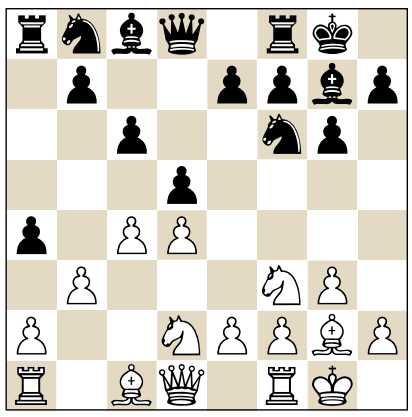
Not a huge surprise; in my last four games before this one, three of my opponents went for this line. I guess something in me brings out the g3-Grünfeld in people.

**4...♘f6 5.0-0 0-0 6.c4 c6**

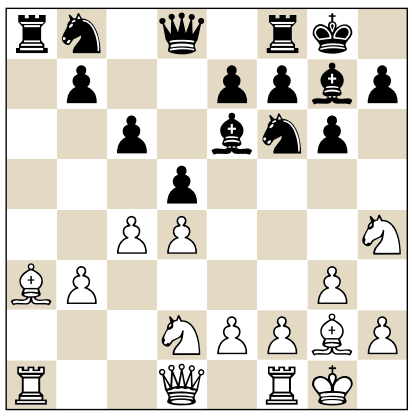


**7.♘bd2** Grischuk went for ♕b3, while Topalov decided to be purely symmetrical. Nepomniachtchi went for something similar from a different move order.

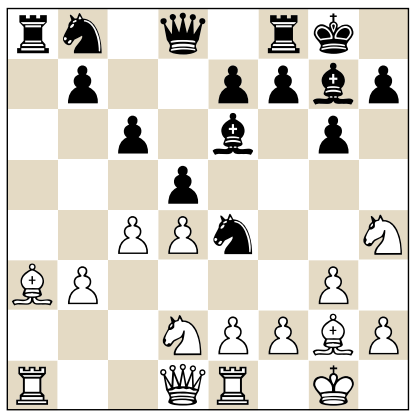
**7...a5** This is how you're supposed to exploit ♘bd2 before White plays b3, since the knight can no longer go to c3. 7...♗f5 8.b3 ♘e4 9.♗b2 ♘d7 would have been my game against Nepo.
**8.b3 a4**



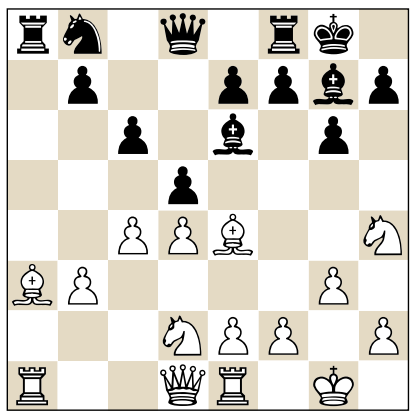
My knowledge of this line consisted of one game – Radjabov-Carlsen, where Black equalized comfortably. During the game I started to ask myself why the bishop should go to b2 when it is far better placed on a3. Sure enough:
**9.♗a3 axb3 10.axb3 ♗f5 11.♘h4 ♗e6**
Here Vladimir started thinking for a long time, which surprised me, because he has very simple, comfortable play, starting with e3, while it's less clear what my next moves should be.



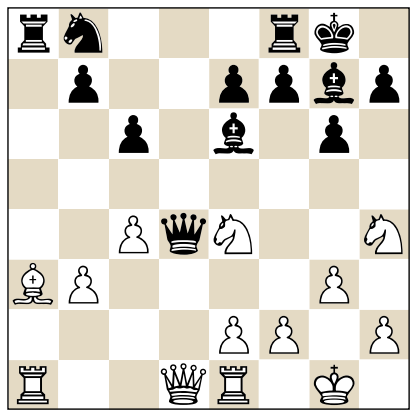
**12.♖e1?!** Okay, so he wants e4, which doesn't look so threatening, but I'd rather get my own play in first. After 12.e3 ♘a6 (in case of 12...♘bd7 I was concerned about 13.f4!?. I had seen something similar in Karjakin-Dominguez, and here it looked particularly annoying to meet) 13.♕e2, White has a slight edge, which might be neutralized only after a number of accurate moves. In any case, this was the way to play for Kramnik, and more so, to do it quickly and confidently.
**12...♘e4!**
A tactical solution to positional problems is just what I needed. Of course, I will be content to trade off a pair of knights if White allows me.
Actually, Kramnik did confirm to me his plan was e4, but after 12...♘a6 13.e4 (13.e3 is inconsistent, but better) 13...dxe4 14.♘xe4 ♘xe4 15.♖xe4 ♖e8 I doubt Black has anything to fear.



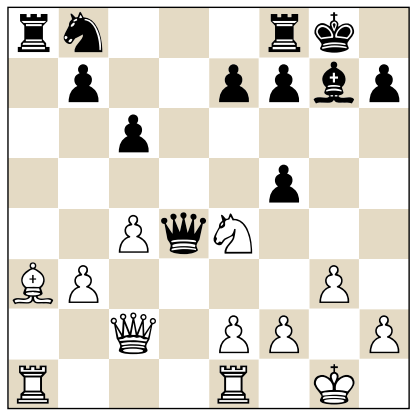
**13.♗xe4**
An unnatural move, but typically Kramnik; he finds the most ambitious way to fight for the initiative.
– 13.♘xe4 dxe4 14.♗xe4 ♕xd4 15.♕xd4 ♗xd4 16.♗b2 ♖xa1 17.♗xa1 leads to nothing but dull equality.
– 13.e3 ♘xd2 14.♕xd2 ♘a6 is still a bit better for White, but it seemed like an improvement for me compared to two moves ago.



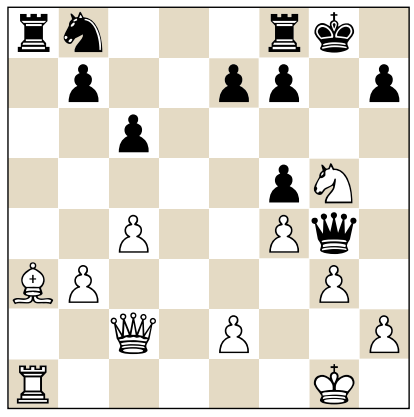
**13...dxe4**
Around this point, I started to realize that 15...♗f5 was not only safe for me but even winning material. I was sure the game continuation was what Kramnik was aiming for, so I was more than a little excited.
I gave 13...♗xd4!? a little thought, but then laziness got the better of me and I decided not to bother with extra calculation.
**14.♘xe4 ♕xd4**



**15.♕c2?**
Continuing the same ambitious strategy, but with a huge tactical flaw. White had no choice but to go for 15.♕xd4 ♗xd4 16.♗b2 ♖xa1 17.♗xa1, with approximate equality.
**15...♗f5! 16.♘xf5 gxf5**

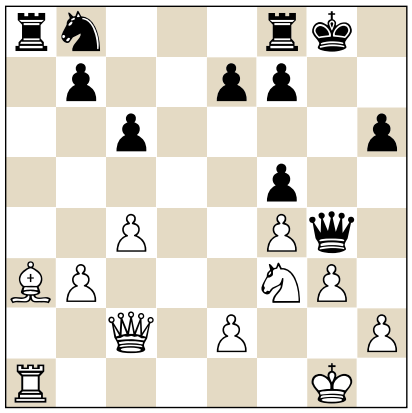


Now White just loses material.
**17.♘g5** 17.♘d2 ♕c3! overloads White's queen. **17...♕g4 18.f4 ♗xa1 19.♖xa1**



**19...h6** Here 19...c5! was extremely strong, basically winning on the spot. I noticed that after 20.h3 it would be messy to take on g3, but somehow I didn't realize that giving up f5 is not a big deal: 20...♕h5 (20...♕xg3+ 21.♔h1, and the rook comes to g1 with strong effect) 21.♕xf5 ♘c6 22.♗b2 ♖xa1+ 23.♗xa1 ♕g6, and White has to acquiesce to a trade of queens.

**20.♘f3**



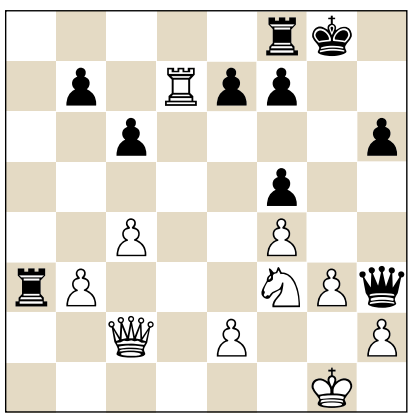
**20...♘d7?** This unnecessarily complicates matters.

My first intention was the best: 20...♕g7! 21.♖a2 ♕f6, bringing the queen back, and next ...♕e6-e4 might come. A queen swap will, of course, end the game immediately.

**21.♖d1 ♖xa3 22.♖xd7**

Now I'm starting to drop pawns, so my only chance for an advantage is to go on the attack:

**22...♕h3!**

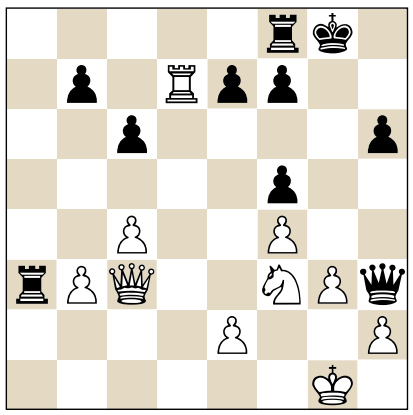


**23.♕c3** On 23.♖xe7, 23...♖a1+ 24.♔f2 ♕f1+ 25.♔e3 ♖c1 wins.

Even something like 23.♕d1 ♖fa8 24.♖d8+ ♔h7 25.♖xa8 ♖xa8 26.♔f2 is unclear due to my chronic weaknesses and offside queen.

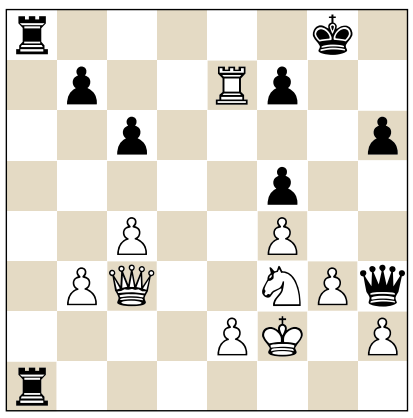
DAGOBERT KOHLMEYER

**The new and old Mr. Dortmund? Fabiano Caruana on the game he won against Vladimir Kramnik: 'He was just too ambitious.'**



**23...e6?** The position was already out of control, but this loses any remaining advantage I had.

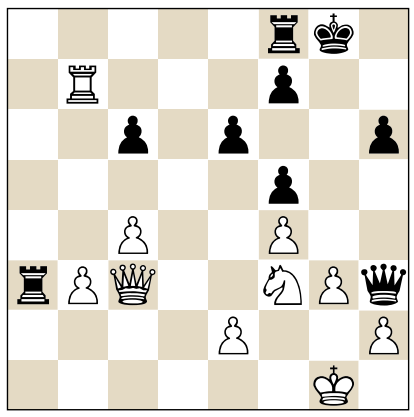
Correct was 23...♖fa8! 24.♖xe7 (24.♔f2 ♖a1 25.♖d8+ ♖xd8 26.♕xa1 is what White should go for, when White's drawing chances seem slightly better than Black's winning chances) 24...♖a1+ 25.♔f2



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

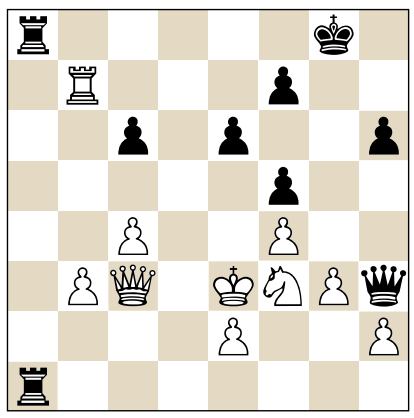
Here I didn't see how to continue, but there was already a forced win: 25...♖f1+ 26.♔e3 ♕g2 27.♕f6 ♖xf3+! 28.exf3 ♕g1+ 29.♔d3 ♕d1+ 30.♔e3 ♕e1+ 31.♔d3 ♖d8+, with mate coming soon.

**24.♖xb7**



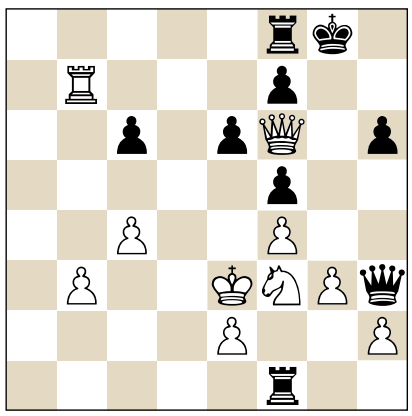
The position is already objectively fine for White.

**24...♖fa8 25.♔f2 ♖a1 26.♔e3**

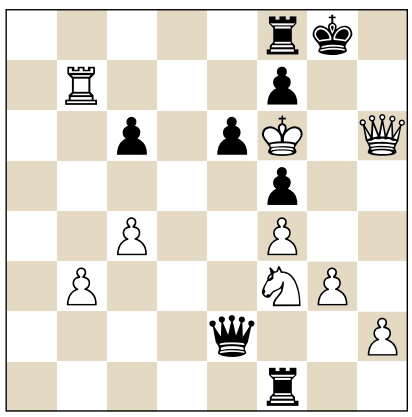


**26...♖f1** I saw I could force a draw with 26...♕f1 27.♕f6 ♕c1+ 28.♔f2 ♕f1+, but I wasn't quite ready to fin-

ish with a draw so soon after having a winning position.
**27.♕f6 ♖f8**



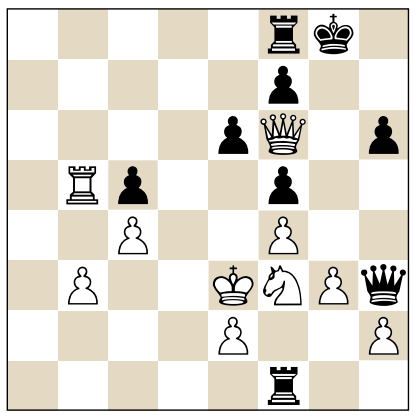
**28.♖d7?!** Not such a bad move objectively, but giving White additional problems to solve. White had a beautiful way to get the king out of the danger zone: 28.♔d4!, and now I would have to choose between 28...♖xf3!? 29.exf3 ♕xh2 30.♔c5, with an unclear position that would likely end in perpetual check, or a draw with 28...♕g2 29.♕xh6 ♕xe2 (29...♕f2+?? 30.♔e5 ♕xe2+ 31.♔f6



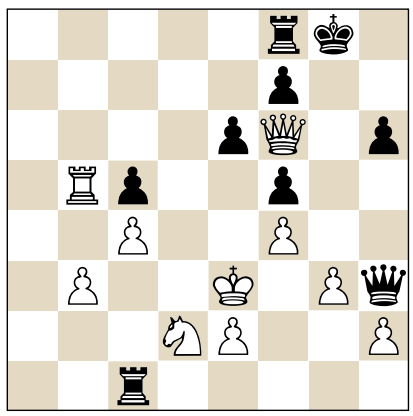
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

is a king march that would make Nigel proud) 30.♕g5+ ♔h7, with a perpetual.

**28...♖b1 29.♖b7** On 29.♘d2?, 29...♖d1 effectively pins the knight.
**29...c5 30.♖b5 ♖f1**

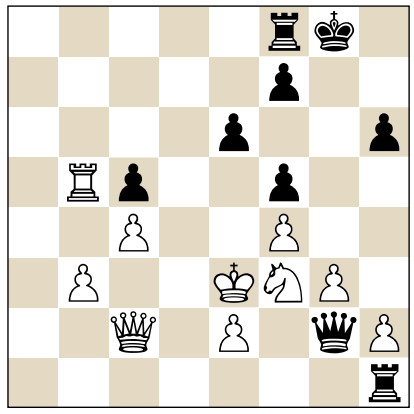


**31.♘d2?**
Only this finally loses the game.
31.♖xc5! was not difficult to calculate, but with little time on the clock it might have looked a bit scary: 31...♕g2 32.♕xh6 ♕f2+ 33.♔d2 ♖d8+, and now the only move, but entirely sufficient for a draw, is 34.♖d5!, and next ♕g5 will lead to a perpetual.
**31...♖c1**



**32.♕b2** White has to withdraw the queen, which is a very bad sign. Suddenly counterplay against my king in the form of ♕xh6 is no longer pending.

32.♘f3 ♕f1 is now game-over, because of 33.♕xh6 ♖c3+ 34.♔d2 ♕c1 mate.
**32...♖d1 33.♕c2 ♖h1 34.♘f3 ♕g2**

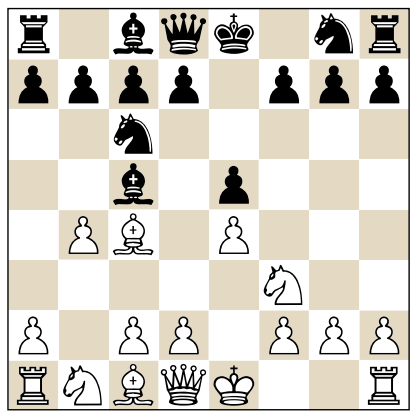


The decisive attack.
**35.♕c3 ♖f1 36.♕f6 ♖f2 37.♔d3 ♖xe2 38.♘g5 ♖d2+**
White resigned.

NOTES BY
**Fabiano Caruana**

IG 5.7 – C52
**Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu**
**Fabiano Caruana**
Dortmund 2015 (7)

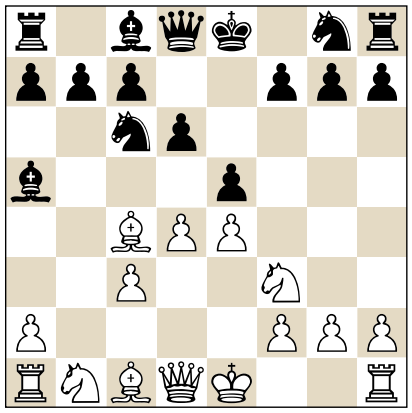
**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.b4!?**



Since I was half a point ahead of Nisipeanu going into this last round, I assumed he would go for a win, but this was not the way to do it. The Evans Gambit may have a romantic reputation, but modern opening analysis has entirely defanged it.
**4...♗xb4 5.c3 ♗a5 6.d4 d6**

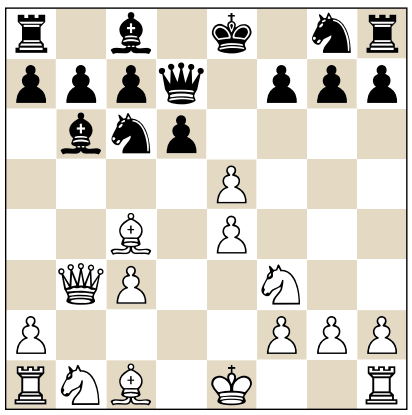
**Dortmund 2015** — **cat. XIX**

| | | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | | TPR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Fabiano Caruana | IGM | USA | 2805 | * | 0 | 1 | 1 | ½ | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5½ | 2942 |
| 2 | Wesley So | IGM | USA | 2778 | 1 | * | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | ½ | ½ | 4 | 2766 |
| 3 | Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu | IGM | GER | 2654 | 0 | 1 | * | ½ | ½ | 1 | ½ | ½ | 4 | 2784 |
| 4 | Vladimir Kramnik | IGM | RUS | 2783 | 0 | 0 | ½ | * | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3½ | 2715 |
| 5 | Ian Nepomniachtchi | IGM | RUS | 2720 | ½ | 0 | ½ | 0 | * | 1 | ½ | ½ | 3 | 2674 |
| 6 | Arkadij Naiditsch | IGM | GER | 2722 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | * | ½ | ½ | 3 | 2674 |
| 7 | Hou Yifan | IGM | CHN | 2676 | 0 | ½ | ½ | 0 | ½ | ½ | * | ½ | 2½ | 2628 |
| 8 | Georg Meier | IGM | GER | 2654 | 0 | ½ | ½ | 0 | ½ | ½ | ½ | * | 2½ | 2632 |



The modern approach. The old games, such as those by Anderssen, had Black capturing on d4 and coming under attack, often losing in under 30 moves (the 'Evergreen Game' being the most famous example).

**7.♕b3 ♕d7 8.dxe5 ♗b6**

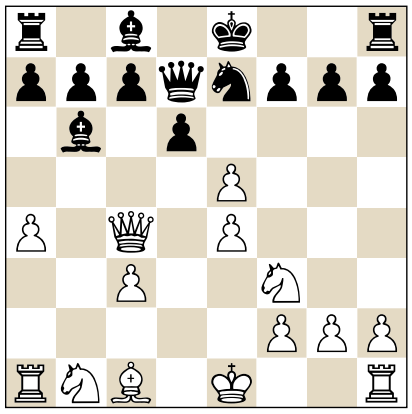


**9.a4**

This move was recently played by Nakamura against Anand in the 2014 London Chess Classic, a tournament I myself played and thus was witness to.

9.♘bd2 dxe5 in most games has led to an advantage for Black.

**9...♘a5 10.♕a2 ♘xc4 11.♕xc4 ♘e7**



**12.♗a3?**

An unfortunate novelty, after which White is already worse.

12.exd6 cxd6 13.0-0 0-0 was Nakamura-Anand. Black already has comfortable play and is the only player with chances of an advantage.

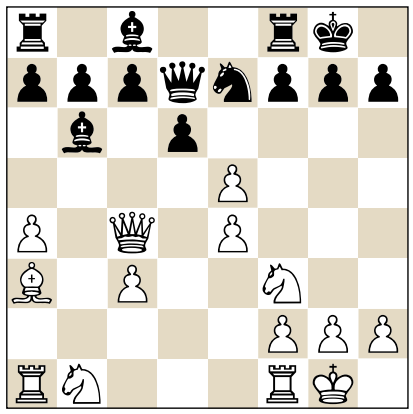
**12...0-0**

12...d5 13.exd5 ♕xd5 was probably

> 'The Evans Gambit may have a romantic reputation, but modern opening analysis has entirely defanged it.'

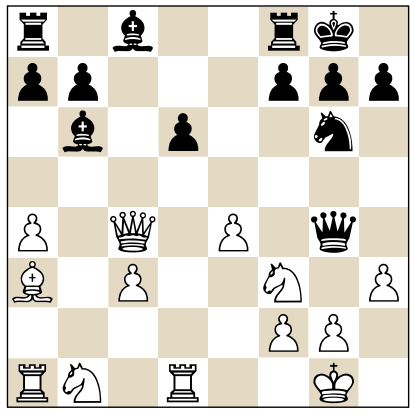
even better. White will most likely end up in a sad endgame with a wrecked structure, and Black has the bishop pair.

**13.0-0**



**13...♖e8** A bit too cautious. To be honest, it was so early in the game I could hardly adjust to already being better.

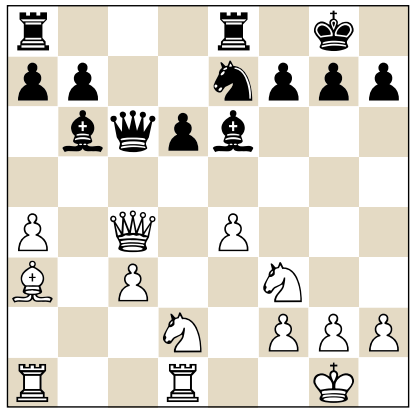
Instead, 13...♘g6! 14.exd6 cxd6 15.♖d1 ♕g4! is strong, but I had missed the crucial point that White's rook is hanging on d1, for example after 16.h3 (16.♗xd6 ♘h4)



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

16...♘e5!.

**14.exd6 cxd6 15.♖d1 ♕c6 16.♘bd2 ♗e6**

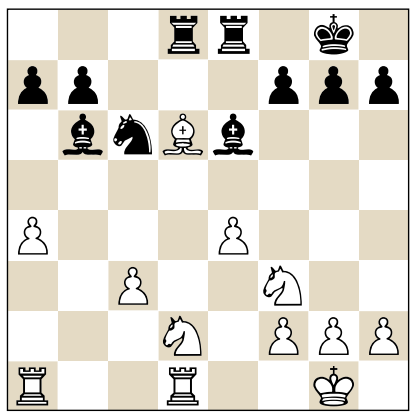


**17.♕xc6**

White should generally avoid endgames, in which the two bishops will have their say.

17.♕d3 would limit the damage, and probably equalize in the long run.

**17...♘xc6 18.♗xd6 ♖ad8**



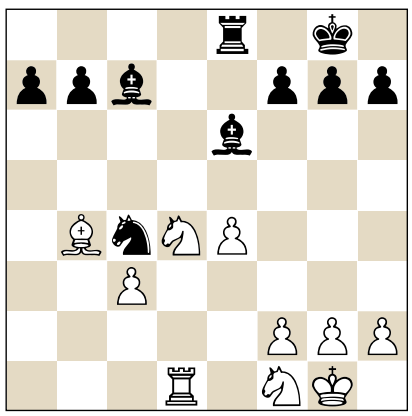
**19.♗b4**

19.e5 f6 breaks up the centre, subsequently exposing White's lack of coordination.

**19...♖d3 20.a5 ♗c7 21.♘f1 ♖xd1 22.♖xd1 ♘xa5 23.♘d4 ♘c4**

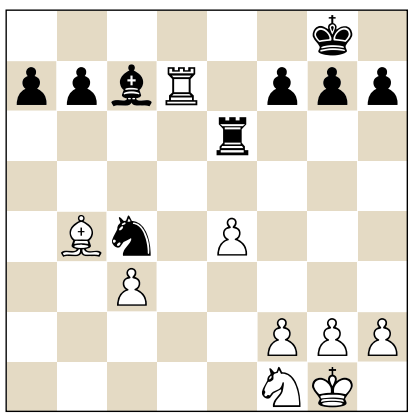
DAGOBERT KOHLMEYER

**The traditional winner's portrait. Fabiano Caruana with a bouquet of flowers and the trophy at Dortmund City Hall.**



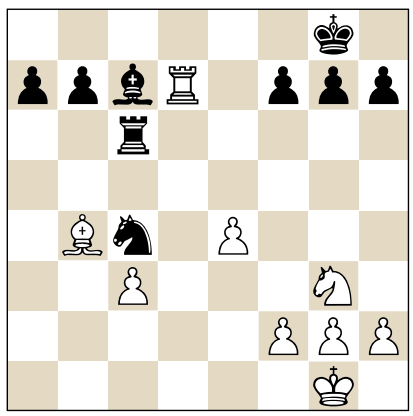
Giving up the bishop pair, but the knight on c4 will be a monster and will help shepherd the a-pawn.

**24.♘xe6 ♖xe6 25.♖d7**



**25...♖c6** Surprisingly, even giving up b7 was very strong: 25...♗b6!? 26.♖xb7 h5, and e4 falls. Black's excellently placed pieces, combined with the strength of the a-pawn, ensure him of good winning chances.

**26.♘g3**

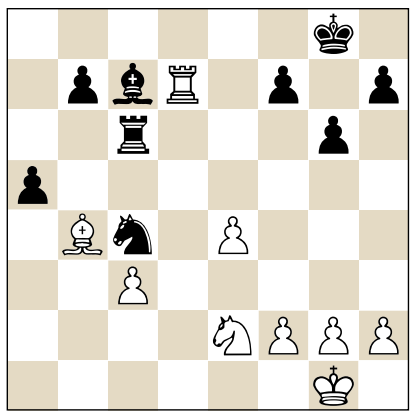


A good idea, but with a tactical flaw.

**26...g6**

Now I saw everything right up to the end. First I considered 26...a5? 27.♘f5 axb4 28.♘e7+ ♔f8 29.♘xc6 b3 30.♖xc7 ♘d6, but after 31.♖d7! b2 32.♖d8+ my king runs out of space, and after 32...♘e8 33.♖d1 the pawn is caught. The rest was easy to figure out: I need ...g6 !

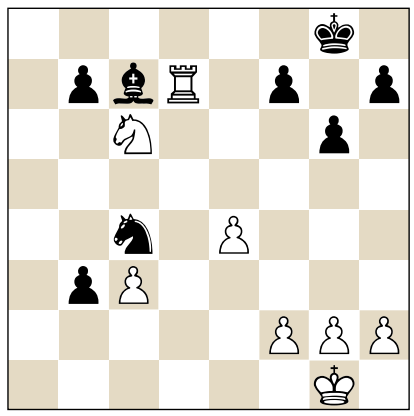
**27.♘e2 a5!**



**28.♘d4?**

Losing, beautifully. I had got up from the board after my last move and when I came back and saw his reply, I couldn't believe my luck in being able to end the tournament in such style. 28.♗e7 was the only move, but after 28...a4 29.♘d4 ♘b6! 30.♘xc6 ♘xd7 the a-pawn is tremendously strong and will probably be sufficient to win the game.

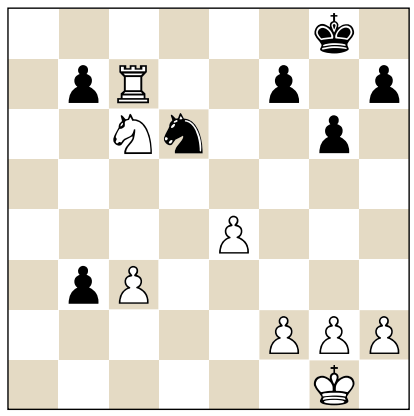
**28...axb4 29.♘xc6 b3**



**30.♖xc7**

White can stop the pawn with 30.♘b4 b2 31.♖d1, but will remain a piece down after 31...♘a3.

**30...♘d6!**



The point, and the only move to win the game. The pawn on b3 is unstoppable, thanks to a unique configuration of pieces which prevents White's rook from returning to the first two ranks or the b-file. Special attention must be paid to the knight on d6, which defends b7, b5 and c4 and blocks the d-file. Finally, White's pawns on e4 and c3 block the rook's return. 31.♘e7+ ♔f8 would be the finish. White resigned. ■

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# KNACKERED

In August of 1981, I rose, at the crack of dawn, at my mother's home in the drab, undistinguished town of Atherton, in Lancashire, to make the long, tedious journey down to Gatwick Airport, to the South of London. There I met Grandmaster Michael Stean, the renowned second of Viktor Kortchnoi, who was to accompany me to the World Junior Championship in Mexico City. For the purpose of economy, the British Chess Federation had booked us on a low-cost Laker Airways flight to Miami, where we would stay overnight, before continuing onward to the modern, choking megalopolis built on the Aztec ruins of Tenochtitlan.

Gatwick was in turmoil, as an illegal air-traffic control strike in the US, resolutely countered by President Ronald Reagan, who promptly sacked the offending militants, caused severe disruption and delays on the busy trans-Atlantic routes. After many hours of anxiety and waiting, we eventually boarded the flight. Shortly after take-off, exhausted, I dozed off. I was woken from my slumber by the sensation of the plane descending. 'Are we there, Michael?' I asked in excitement. 'No, we are landing in Manchester' he replied. It transpired that this was a scheduled stop, the existence of which the BCF travel agent had overlooked. I had spent the entire day travelling all of 12 miles…

At long last we arrived in Mexico. Michael, with the experience of travelling to the Philippines in 1978, cautioned me to be wary of the dangers of fatigue and jet-lag, opining that 1½/2 would be a reasonable start. As I had finished second, behind Kasparov, the previous year, I considered this view to be unnecessarily conservative. But when I physically picked up the wrong bishop in the first game, I understood exactly what he had meant. Fortunately the fingerfehler was not fatal, and I attained the desired foundation of a win and a draw.

The tournament was unusual for a number of reasons, not the least being a brutal murder on the hotel doorstep – they were still mopping up the blood when I came down for breakfast. Incidentally, on the theme of homicides, one of the participants, Rogerio Roderiguez from Angola, would later, as a marksman and Brigadier in the army, lead the assassination squad attack on Jonas Savimbi, which effectively ended the savage and protracted civil war in that country. While he doesn't claim credit for delivering the fatal shot, the outwardly gentle Rogerio told me, with a wry smile, when I pressed him on the subject in Luanda, in 2006, that he had made sure Savimbi was dead. But I digress… If one is hoping to play tolerable chess, you need to be in fair physical condition. This was problematic for the ¾ of the participants, in Mexico, who were struck down with food poisoning. Children are particularly vulnerable because they usually do not have the financial means to escape unsanitary cuisine. The English contingent prophylactically opted to run up a hefty bill in a restaurant opposite, for which we were duly reimbursed by our federation – although not without raised eyebrows.

Most chess players are too focused on the intricacies of opening theory to give proper attention to corporeal needs. When Garry Kasparov honoured me by proposing that I play him in a match in St. Louis this spring, I was asked to provide a couple of dates within a shortish time-frame. I said that the end of March was ideal, but that I could, if really pushed, do the end of April, after the Thailand Open, in which I was already contracted to participate. Now I am not implying that the 13th world chess champion would intentionally disadvantage me, but guess which option I got? I knew it would be an ordeal traversing 11 time-zones on three flights, but it turned out to be even more gruelling than anticipated. Flying business class eased the discomfort somewhat, but despite having a couple of days of rest beforehand, I never recovered from the tribulation of waking at 2.30 a.m. and 3 a.m. on the mornings of the games. In a nutshell, I was totally wrecked. The blitz format did not help one jot either, as it tends to sharply exaggerate one's form. Doubtless my detractors will dismiss this as the feeble excuse of a useless has-been, but given that I only succumbed to Garry by the narrowest margin in Leuven four years ago, and that it is implausible that he has improved dramatically in the intervening period of his retirement, it is one I shall stick to.

In the 1980s I became aware that the Hungarian legend Lajos Portisch was in the habit of arriving at least two days before tournaments. For a while I considered this to be both unnecessary, especially

> ‘The tournament was unusual for a number of reasons, not the least being a brutal murder on the hotel doorstep – they were still mopping up the blood when I came down for breakfast.’

within Europe, and a mild eccentricity. After all, who wants to spend an extra day in Wijk aan Zee in January (it is a wonderful place, but perhaps not one to choose for a winter vacation)? It was not until I was bumped off an overbooked British Airways flight to Madrid, en route to Linares one year, that I understood the wisdom of this precaution. The exceedingly unhelpful BA staff then grudgingly routed me via Lisbon, where I had to change planes for the Castilian capital. After a taxi, a slow train and another taxi, I eventually arrived at the famed Hotel Anibal at around 1 a.m. A plate of jamon serrano and a glass or two of red wine revived my spirits, but not my body, and I soon crashed to bed.

At 7 a.m. I learned another advantage of an early arrival, when I was woken by the sound of the clanking elevator. The only way I could possibly get back to sleep was to change to a quieter room, far from operating machinery – which, of course, meant I would then be wide-awake. I don’t often play for a draw with the white pieces, but decided that this would be the most prudent course given my wretched physical condition – particularly as Vassily Ivanchuk has always been a troublesome opponent for me. I whipped out the 3.♗b5+ Sicilian exchanged off what I could when I could and ignobly held on. The following year Ivanchuk himself experienced an even more harrowing journey to the Andalusian chess Mecca, arriving at the ungodly time of 5 a.m. Facing Garry Kasparov, just a few hours later, he too employed the same bishop check with, dare I say it, similarly craven intent? The result, though, was somewhat different, as Kasparov was famously routed in arguably the most humiliating manner of his career.

Reaching Shamkir – the venue of the Vugar Gashimov Memorial – requires a flight to Ganja, which, despite its stupefacient name, is in the Caucasus and not the Caribbean. There are essentially only two ways of doing this – either via Baku, or Istanbul. The smart chess players – like this year’s winner, Magnus Carlsen – chose the former route, as the air-trip from the Azeri capital is diurnal. Vishy Anand chose the night flight from the more convenient Turkish hub, but sagely added an extra day to his itinerary to permit his Circadian rhythms to adjust. However Anish Giri, a tad naively, perhaps, travelled via Istanbul without making any allowance for the physiological disruption and paid the price with a first-round loss. Of course, one cannot prove this would not have happened anyway, but given that top-level games are often decided by a solitary error, details like this do matter.

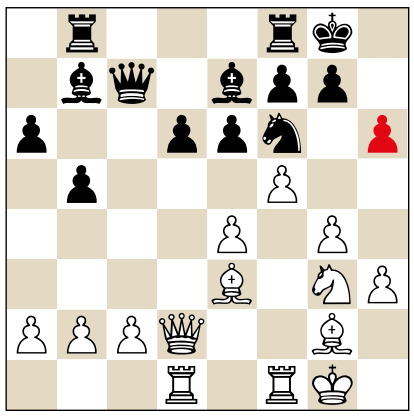
If you can’t embrace Hypnos naturally, you can always try chemically. Alcohol is the most commonly used soporific and it even works – up to a point. Alas (and here I speak from many decades of extensive, if not to say excessive experimentation), it does nothing positive for either the length or quality of sleep. If you need a couple of hours’ kip, it is fine, but for anything longer it is a most unreliable friend and has the additional drawback of tending to fug the brain when you are actually conscious. Melatonin is somewhat better, however. Some grandmasters, like Michal Krasenkow, swear by it. I have found that supplements of this naturally occurring hormone are generally helpful, but don’t always work. For example, in Edmonton, Canada, a few years ago, I kept waking up in the middle of the night however many pills I took. I might add that supplies are not invariably easy to obtain either, so you should stock up when you have the chance.

Now this article is almost finished, I can deal with my unanswered correspondence. I have a pending invitation to the New Zealand Open, in Auckland, at the beginning of 2016. Given the immense distance involved, if I have any sense, I should arrive several days in advance, permitting ample time to acclimatise. But, let’s face it, who wants to be separated from one’s loved ones over the holiday period? No, like a fool, I shall probably show up at the last moment, hoping for the best. Expect a whinging tournament report next January. ■

# Watch Your Little Finger

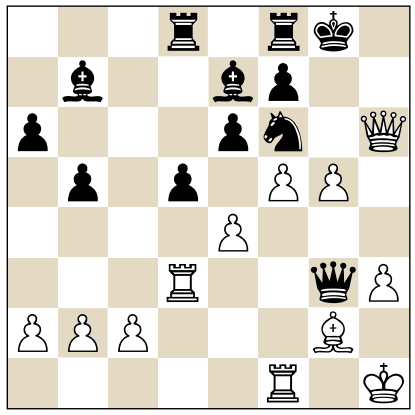
**Arthur van de Oudeweetering**

In Norway Chess, Vishy Anand snatched MVL's black pawn on h6 with a typical bishop sacrifice and won a smooth game. Let's have a look at similar examples, so that hopefully we won't miss (or underestimate!) such opportunities in our own games.



**Anand-Vachier-Lagrave**
Stavanger 2015

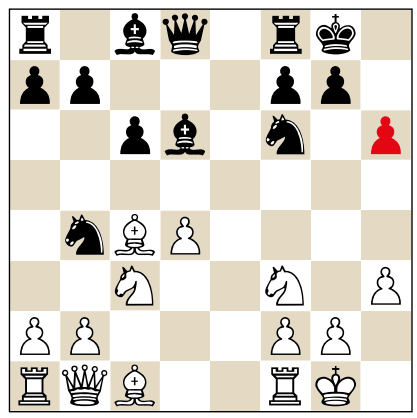
**18.♔h1** Not yet! During the press conference, the players briefly tried to remember why the immediate 18.♗xh6 gxh6 19.♕xh6 would not work, until Vachier-Lagrave mentioned 19...d5 20.g5 ♕xg3 21.♖d3 ♗c5+ 22.♔h1 ♗e3! as the crucial difference. Then White has to escape with a draw after 23.♖xe3 ♕xe3 24.fxe6 ♘xe4 25.exf7+. **18...♖bd8** 18...♔h7 was the move Anand had expected and which would have prevented White's reply. Vachier-Lagrave, however, still thought his position was fine. Confused by last-minute preparation, or too much confidence in concrete calculation? In any case, the following sacrifice was clearly underestimated: **19.♗xh6 gxh6 20.♕xh6** 'Now the difference (compared to 18.♗xh6) is that I have at least a draw' (Anand). When the calculation gets tough, that's always a reassuring thought. However, in this case Anand had already noticed the winning idea of ♖d3. Another interesting aspect of an imminent draw was seen in Dominguez-Polgar, Khanty-Mansiysk World Cup 2011. This game featured the same bishop sac, when Judit, being in a must-win situation, found herself limited in the choice of variations. **20...d5 21.g5 ♕xg3 22.♖d3**



**22...♘h5?!** 22...♘xe4, and now 23.f6! (23.♗xe4 ♕e5!) 23...♗xf6 24.♗xe4 is the right way, as pointed out by the players, when White should be winning too. **23.g6!** Overlooked by Vachier-Lagrave; the game is over. 23.♖xg3 ♘xg3+ 24.♔g1 ♗c5+ 25.♖f2 exf5; 23.♕xh5 ♕e5!. **23...fxg6 24.fxg6 ♖xf1+ 25.♗xf1 ♘f6 26.♖xg3 dxe4 27.♗e2 e3+ 28.♔g1 ♗c5 29.♔f1 1-0**

Immediately after the game, the players referred to Navara-Grischuk, Tromsø 2014, which not only featured the same opening moves up to Black's 17th, but which was also decided by the same bishop sac! And more top players have been ambushed by the idea recently: check, for example, Karjakin-Jobava, Tashkent 2014, New In Chess 2014/8.

In these examples the queen was lined up diagonally behind the bishop. In other cases it follows up the sacrifice by entering on g6. Like here:

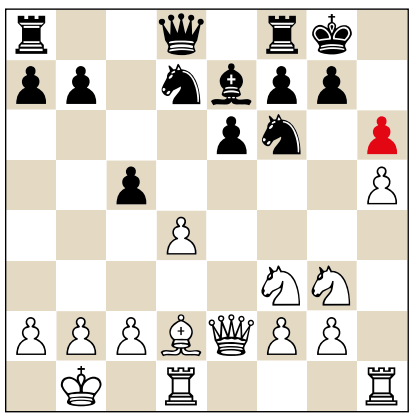


**Fier-Semcesen**
Koge 2014

This position may arise from a variety of openings: the Queen's Gambit Accepted, the French Exchange or the Chigorin Defence. Having looked at the diagram, you will certainly have started digging into the complications arising from **12.♗xh6 gxh6 13.♕g6+ ♔h8 14.♕xh6+ ♘h7** 14...♔g8? 15.♘e5, and White quickly joins in with a rook via e1 and e3 to g3. Sometimes the bishop may switch to the b1-h7 diagonal. **15.♘e4** Keeping the black queen at a distance. **15...♗e7 16.♘e5 ♘d5** A cautious move. A typical alternative is to return material with a more active move like 16...♕xd4 or 16...♗f5. **17.f4 ♗f5 18.♘g5 ♔g8 19.g4?!** 19.♖f3! ♗xg5 (19...♕d6 20.♘gxf7 ♕xh6 21.♘xh6+ ♔g7 22.♘xf5+ ♖xf5 23.♖g3+! ♔f8 24.♖b3!)

20.fxg5 ♗e4 21.♖g3, and the white attack remains strong. **19...♕b6?** Black succumbs under the pressure. 19...♗xg5 20.fxg5 ♗g6, and Black seems to hold. **20.gxf5 ♕xd4+ 21.♖f2! ♘xg5 22.fxg5 ♗c5 23.f6 ♕xf2+ 24.♔h1 ♘xf6 25.gxf6 ♕g3 26.♗d3 ♖fd8 27.♕h7+ ♔f8 28.♕xf7** Mate.

The surprise effect becomes bigger when the queen joins in later. For instance, in my book *Improve Your Chess Pattern Recognition* (New In Chess) I gave another MVL (sic!) example, where he was surprised by Wesley So's …♗xh3, followed by … ♕c8.
And what about this classic, an early proof of Jobava's creativity, albeit in a regular and well respected opening.



**Jobava-Bareev**
Rethymnon 2003

**15.d5!? exd5 16.♗xh6!** It will take some time for the white queen to join the attack, but for now square f5 has been vacated for a killer knight. **16...gxh6 17.♘f5 ♖e8 18.♘xh6+** 18.♕d2 is too early: 18...♗f8 19.♘xh6+ ♗xh6 20.♕xh6 ♘e4 21.♖h4 (21.♖xd5 ♕f6) 21...♘df6, and Black keeps the white pieces away. **18...♔f8** 18...♔g7 does run into 19.♕d2, as after 19...♘e4 20.♕xd5 ♔xh6 21.♕xe4 ♕c7 22.♕f5 ♘f6 23.♘e5 White's attack is too strong. **19.♘g5** Although Jobava went on to win after the text-move, analysis and subsequent games have proven that the best move here was again to involve the queen in the attack with 19.♕d2, an important tactical finesse being 19...♘g8 20.♘xf7! ♔xf7, and now, instead of the obvious 21.♕xd5+, the computer shows us the even better 21.h6!.

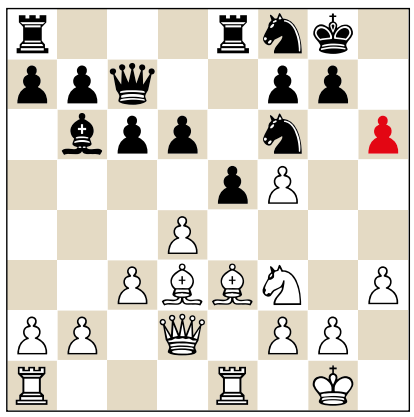
In this Caro-Kann mainline the pinky on h6 often falls victim to a sacrificial attack. Also check out the spectacular game Najer-Laznicka, Prague 2015, which saw the future European champ launch another ♗xh6!?. Other openings also tend to give rise to the bishop

> 'Clearly, these old examples have not prevented the pattern to recur regularly up and till today.'

sacrifice, like this Four Knights line with 7.♘e2 (yes indeed, recently successfully adopted by Anand against Mamedyarov, but no, no sacrifice on h6 there):

**Baskaran Adhiban**
**Erwin l'Ami**
Dieren 2009

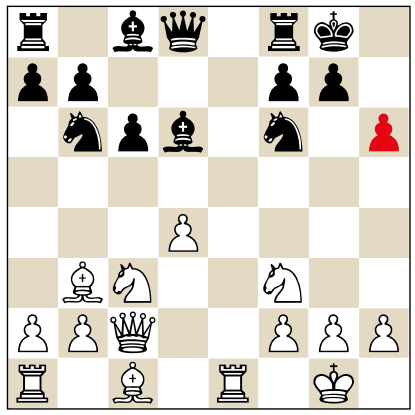
**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗b5 ♗b4 5.0-0 0-0 6.d3 d6 7.♘e2 ♘e7 8.c3 ♗a5 9.♘g3 ♘g6 10.d4 ♗b6 11.h3 h6 12.♖e1 c6 13.♗d3 ♖e8 14.♗e3 ♗e6 15.♕d2 ♕c7 16.♘f5 ♗xf5 17.exf5 ♘f8**



**18.♗xh6 ♘8h7!** Yes, watch out, a sacrifice may also be refused! After 18...gxh6 19.♕xh6 White indeed would have a strong initiative, for example 19...♘8h7 20.♘g5 exd4 21.♘xh7 ♘xh7 22.f6 ♘xf6 23.♕g5+. **19.g4 e4 20.g5 ♘h5 21.♗xe4 gxh6 22.f6 ♕d7 23.♕d3?** Now Black remains a piece up. After 23.♔h2 l'Ami intended 23...♖xe4!? 24.♖xe4 ♕f5, but here White is still hanging on. **23...♘xg5 24.♗f5 ♖xe1+ 25.♖xe1 ♘f4 26.♗xd7 ♘xd3 27.♖e3 ♘f4 28.♘h4 ♘d5 0-1**

The idea that a small move forward by the h-pawn in front of a castled king may provoke sacrificial ideas is certainly not new. Romanovsky, for instance, even devoted several pages to this particular theme in his renowned middlegame book. On one of the examples there – Szily-Bronstein, Moscow 1949 – Bronstein himself commented: 'If a chess player plays his rook's pawn up one square too early after having castled there is always the danger that this pawn will be attacked' (*The Sorcerer's Apprentice*). As simple as that.

Clearly, these old examples have not prevented the pattern to recur regularly up and till today. One more fragment. Last month, a young Russian grandmaster did not hesitate:



**Oparin-Sibashvili**
Moscow 2015

**13.♗xh6 gxh6 14.♕g6+ ♔h8 15.♕xh6+ ♘h7 16.♘e4 ♗e7 17.♘f6!** And White went on to win gradually after **17...♗f5 18.♖e5** 18.♘xh7! ♗xh7 19.♖xe7 ♕xe7 20.♖e1 ♕d7 21.♘e5! was even better. Chess often remains hard work, too! ■

Havana

# Travels with Yu Yangyi

The 50th Capablanca Memorial in Havana ended in a dashing victory for China's Yu Yangyi. On his return to Beijing the happy winner spoke to our correspondent **Jilin Zhang** about yet another major Chinese success and a trip full of adventures that he will remember for a long time.

It was his first trip abroad on his own, the first time he travelled alone. At the last moment his intended companion couldn't go, and at such short notice there were no other chess players to accompany him to Cuba. That was a big pity, since it turned out to be a journey full of unusual experiences and adventures – countless new impressions that Yu Yangyi would have loved to share with a travel companion. Last night, on his return to Beijing, he shared them with members of the national team and had them rolling with laughter. Now he is telling me.

We've agreed to meet at a place that specializes in Nanjing snacks. In Cuba he has eaten mainly meat, which was fine, but he really missed the vegetables. Yangyi cannot live without his veggies. He's brought me a big Cuban cigar as a present for my husband. He didn't smoke any himself, smoking being something he can easily live without. He enjoys the food and the free day he has before he travels on, tomorrow, to his next tournament, the Super Grandmasters in Danzhou. And he eagerly talks about his trip to Cuba and the surprises it had in store for him.

**At the opening ceremony of the Danzhou Super Grandmasters, only days after his return from Cuba, Yu Yangyi gave a speech about his life as a chess professional.**

The first hurdle he had to take was at Beijing airport, where 30 minutes before his flight was to leave they didn't let him pass the security check. For some reason his electronic visa was not accepted. The customs officer checked his passport with great diligence and only at the last moment did he let him go. Sometimes it helps if they recognize you as a high-profile person.

The first leg of his journey took him from Beijing to Paris, a 10-hour flight. He was sitting next to two lesbians, the first new experience for him. Following a two-hour stop-over at Charles de Gaulle, he boarded the plane for Cuba. By now he was quite tired and he slept for seven of the 10 hours that this flight took. An expensive luxury, as he would discover the following morning...

Entering Cuba took quite some time. He joined a long queue and when it was his turn, a policeman interviewed him for 45 minutes. But then he had finally arrived. Yangyi met the man who had come to pick him up and his stay in Havana could commence! His first impression was that Cuba reminded him of China as he had seen it in images of the 1970s and '80s. A particular detail that struck him was the seat of the taxi, which had been made from a cardboard box. The taxi took him to the Hilton hotel, where he was welcomed by big portraits of Fidel Castro, Marilyn Monroe and Bobby Fischer. The Hilton is located in a new part of the city, close to Havana University. Yangyi was happy with the room he got, with a supersize bed and sea view. The hotel staff was very friendly and treated him like a famous star, as if he was Messi. From his window he could see a more luxurious hotel nearby, where the Chinese President stays during visits.

## Yu Yangyi
### facts & figures

**1994, June 8** born in Huangshi, Hubei Province
**2001** U-8 Chinese championship, 2nd
**2003** U-10 World Juniors, shared 2nd
**2004** U-10 Chinese Junior Champion
**2004** U-10 World Juniors, shared 1st
**2009** World Juniors, 7th
**2009** World Cup, knocks out Movsesian and Bartel
**2011** Aeroflot Open, 4th-10th
**2011** Danzhou, 1st (TPR 2880)
**2013** World Junior Champion
**2014** Chinese Champion
**2014** Asian Champion
**2014** Member of winning Chinese team at Tromsø Olympiad
**2014** Qatar Masters, 1st
**2015** Member of winning Chinese team at World Teams
**2015** Capablanca Memorial, 1st
Yu Yangyi lives in Beijing, where he just graduated from the Capital Institute of Physical Education.

As it was already late, he didn't want to go out for dinner anymore. Instead he ate some of the noodles he had brought and went to sleep. The next morning he made a nasty discovery: on the flight from France to Cuba he had been robbed! While he was sleeping someone had stolen a considerable amount of money from the carry-on bag that he had stowed away in the overhead compartments. The thief had not taken his credit card or his Chinese money, but 1200 of the 1600 U.S. dollars that he had brought were gone. For a moment he felt miserable. First prize in the Capablanca Memorial was 1500 US dollars. To win that prize he had travelled to a distant country, would face tough opposition and had had to struggle with visa problems. Not a move had been made yet, and he had already lost 1200. The money he had brought was to cover his Internet costs and sundry expenses.

After he had gone for breakfast he found out that Internet access in the hotel cost 10 dollars per hour. That was indeed expensive. For lunch he again had noodles, as he failed to find the restaurant that the man who had come to pick him up had said was on the first floor of the hotel.

He contacted his parents and told them about the stolen money. It was unclear to him how they took the news, but he himself took a decision. He told himself: I chose to come to Cuba myself. I still have 400 dollars and my credit card. Staying away from the Internet will only help me concentrate on the games and I will have more time to prepare. So, now pull yourself together and focus on the games!

'The next morning he made a nasty discovery: on the flight from France to Cuba he had been robbed!'

His first plan was to go out and get a taste of the city, but this was impossible because of the weather. Torrents of rain came pouring down, so heavy that it was almost scary. By now the food he had brought with him was gone and he didn't know where dinner would be served.

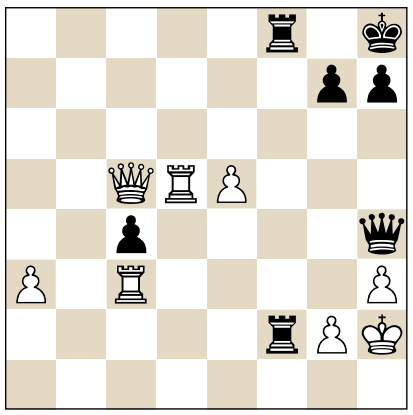
And then his luck changed. In the lobby he ran into Ian Nepomniachtchi, who told him that both lunch and dinner were in a restaurant on the second floor! It was around 8 p.m. now and he was happy to join his Russian colleague. Yangyi was starving and had a big meal. As he was eating, his mood improved. He didn't have to care about the meals anymore and the 400 dollars he had left could be used for the Internet anyway! Even the water during the meals proved to be for free. When the waiter first asked him if he wanted water, he had said no, expecting it to be very expensive (as it is for the average Cuban citizen), but then he found out he had got coupons from the organizers and could have mineral water without any additional cost.

The next day he won his first game against Dmitry Andreikin after five hours of play. After the game some Chinese overseas students came to meet him and offered to take him shopping and sightseeing. Thanks to them he went to see all the major landmarks and places in Havana. Whenever he finished a game early and of course on the free day, they were there to be his guides. And they helped him to understand typical Cuban phenomena, such as the prostitutes in the streets and the men dressed up like women. Or old ladies all dressed up that have their photo taken with you and ask for money in return. People coming up to you asking for clothes and other goods. Everyone thinks that foreigners are rich and his new friends told him that it helps to say that you're a foreign student and not rich at all; they will let you pass.

In the meantime luck was on his side in the tournament as well. He didn't lose the bad positions he had and as he began to score points, he started thinking that he had chances to achieve a good result. Every day there were a lot of spectators, whose enthusiasm was heart-warming. After he had beaten Nepomniachtchi in Round 5, which gave him the sole lead halfway through the event with 4½ from 5, many fans came to

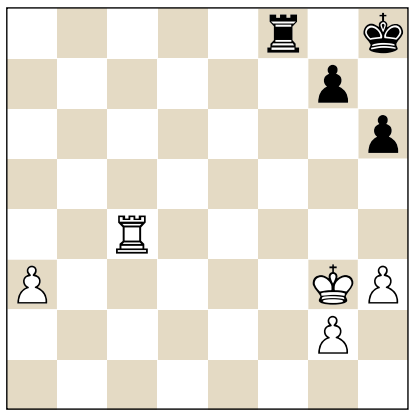
congratulate him, shake hands and take photos. The language barriers he tried to overcome with the translation function of his smartphone! The journalists were real chess lovers as well and asked professional and knowledgeable questions.

Thanks to the reports in the newspapers he had become a star. In the restaurant people would come up to him and in shops he was offered discounts. The crucial game of the tournament he played in Round 7 against Pavel Eljanov. Despite a loss in Round 6 against Andreikin, Yangyi was still in the lead, but with a win Eljanov would seriously threaten him, as the tiebreak in case they finished shared first would then favour the Ukrainian. The game ended in a draw, but Eljanov missed a big chance.



**Eljanov-Yu Yangyi**
Havana 2015 (7)
position after 37...♖f2

**38.♖g3?** Missing a deadly blow. The calm 38.♖xc4! wins a rook. If the black queen gives up the defence of the rook on f2, White can simply take it because of Black's weak back rank, and 38...♖2f4 39.♕xf8+ ♖xf8 40.♖xh4 also leaves Black a rook (and two pawns) down. **38...♕f4** This move improves Black's position considerably, and after **39.♖d1 ♖e2 40.e6 ♖xe6 41.♖d4 ♕b8 42.♖xc4 ♖g6 43.♕c7 ♖xg3 44.♕xg3 ♕xg3+ 45.♔xg3 h6**



Yu Yangyi reached a well-known ending that he didn't lose.

After this lucky break Yangyi felt that he was going to win the tournament. In Round 8 he more or less clinched the issue with a fine win over Dominguez, a game that he annotates below. With two short draws against Bruzon and Nepomniachtchi he coasted home and became the winner of the 50th Capablanca Memorial.

Immediately after the last round he headed for the airport to embark on a journey that was scheduled to take 27 hours due to a longer stopover in Paris. Having learned his lesson, Yangyi put his prize-money in his pocket and chose an aisle seat, which felt safer.

Nevertheless his adventures had not yet come to an end. At Charles de Gaulle airport an alarm caused total chaos. Everyone, which meant some 70,000 people, was requested to re-enter the airport and go through security again, allegedly because someone with a false ID had entered the airport. Wanting to know what was going on, Yangyi posted a message on Weibo (the Chinese Twitter) and received a reply from a friend in the U.S., who told him that there had actually been a bomb scare. There seemed to be no real threat, but the airport authorities took the alarm very seriously. As a result Yangyi, carrying some six bags, one of them broken, had to move through long lines for one and a half hours. It was so crowded and chaotic, with people screaming and crying, that at some point he feared he might fall and be crushed in a stampede. Fortunately, no such thing happened and with a big sigh of relief he finally boarded the plane and plopped down in his chair.

At which point the flight attendant announced that there was one passenger too many on board and that one person had to get off! After all the tribulations he had gone through, Yangyi feared for a moment that that unlucky person might be him, but he soon found out that no such thing was going to happen.

Ten hours later he arrived in Beijing. Outside the airport he took a taxi. The weather was terrible. Yangyi looked at the heavy foggy sky and said to himself: 'It's so great to be home.'

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NOTES BY
**Yu Yangyi**

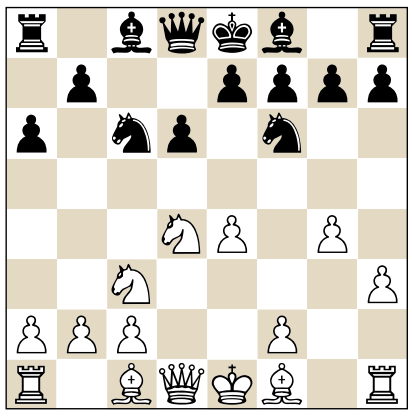
SI 14.7 – B90
**Yu Yangyi**
**Leinier Dominguez**
Havana 2015 (8)

This game was played in Round 8. I was one point ahead of second place and would have two Whites and one Black in the last three rounds, which made me quite optimistic. In the previous rounds I had had three Blacks in a row, so this time I really wanted to put my opponent under pressure with white.

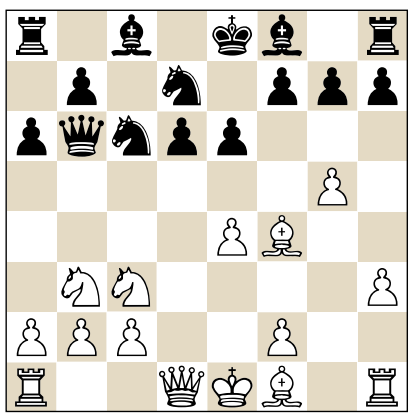
**1.e4 c5**

I had not spent much time preparing for 1...c5, as I thought my opponent would play 1...e5 instead. Because he had just lost a game, I assumed he would want to play a calm and solid game.

**2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗e3 ♘g4 7.♗c1 ♘f6 8.♗e3 ♘g4 9.♗c1 ♘c6 10.h3 ♘f6 11.g4**



**11...♕b6 12.♘b3 e6 13.g5 ♘d7 14.♗f4!**

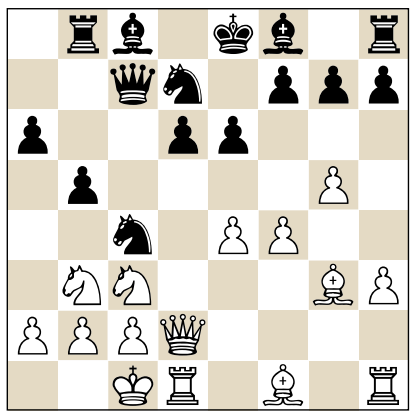


This is my novelty, which I had studied while I was training in Beijing. But I didn't repeat the line before the game, so it took me some time to recall the variations.

**14...♕c7**

Weaker is 14...♘ce5?! 15.♗e3 ♕c7 16.f4 ♘c4 17.♗xc4 ♕xc4 18.♕f3, with a clearly better game for White.

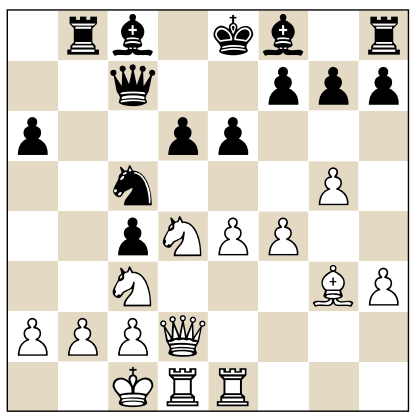
**15.♕d2 b5 16.0-0-0 ♘ce5 17.♗g3 ♖b8 18.f4 ♘c4**



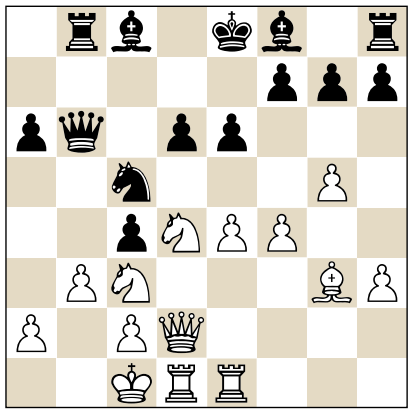
**19.♗xc4**

A good alternative was the active 19.♕d4!?, for instance 19...♘db6 20.♘d2! ♘xd2 21.♖xd2 h6 22.g6! fxg6 23.e5 d5 24.♗d3 (White wants to attack) 24...g5 25.fxg5 ♗c5 26.♕g4 h5 27.♕f3, and due to the lack of development of the black pieces, White has quite a good position.

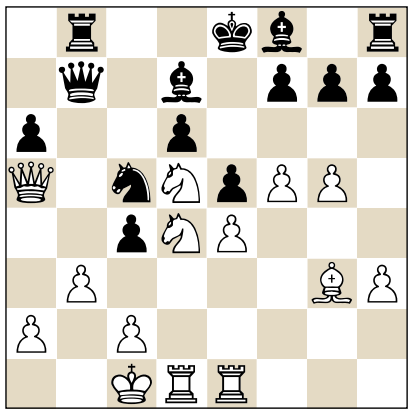
**19...bxc4 20.♘d4 ♘c5 21.♖he1**



Up to here I had not spent much time, since I had studied similar positions. My opponent was less familiar with this line, so he was very cautious, and by now he did not have a lot of time left on his clock. We have reached a very typical Sicilian position. White has a lot of threats: ♘f5, ♘d5 or f5. I think the white attack should put Black under a lot of pressure during a game. **21...♕b6 22.b3**



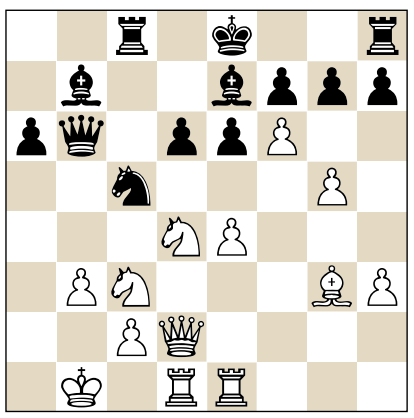
**22...cxb3** Two sample lines showing the potential of White's position: 22...♗d7 23.f5 e5 24.♘d5 ♕b7 25.♕a5!



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

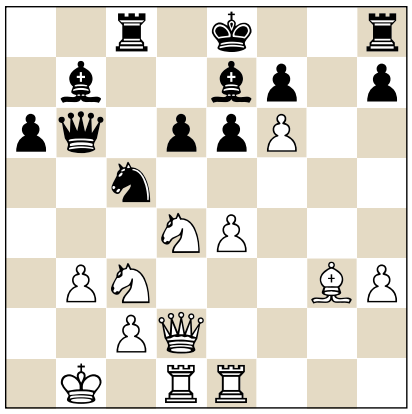
25...♖c8 (25...exd4 26.e5 ♕xd5 27.exd6+ ♗e6 28.d7+ is very good for White) 26.bxc4 ♘a4 (26...exd4 27.e5, and White is winning) 27.♘b3 ♖xc4 28.♖d3, with good attacking chances. Or 22...♗e7 23.♔b1! (23.f5 leads to a perpetual after 23...♘d3+ 24.cxd3 ♕xd4 25.dxc4 ♗xg5 26.♕xg5 ♕xc3+ 27.♔b1 ♖xb3+) 23...0-0 24.f5, and again White is attacking.

**23.axb3 ♗b7 24.f5 ♖c8 25.♔b1 ♗e7 26.f6!**



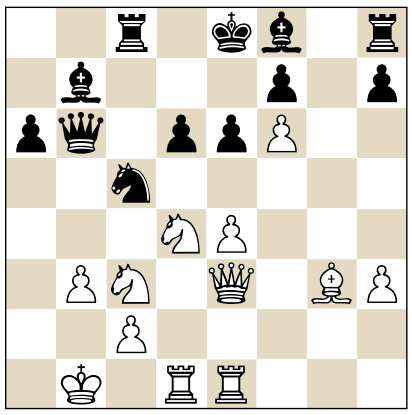
My pieces are well placed and very well coordinated. In addition, the Black king is not safe, so I try my best to open up the position and get an advantage with some tactics.

**26...gxf6 27.gxf6**



**27...♗f8** In case of 27...♗xf6 White has 28.e5 dxe5 29.♗xe5 ♗xe5 30.♖xe5 ♖d8 31.♕f2! ♘d7 32.♘a4 ♕d6 (32...♕c7 runs into 33.♖xe6+ fxe6 34.♘xe6, winning) 33.♖ee1, and even though White has lost a pawn, he has great compensation. The black king is not safe in the middle.

**28.♕e3!**

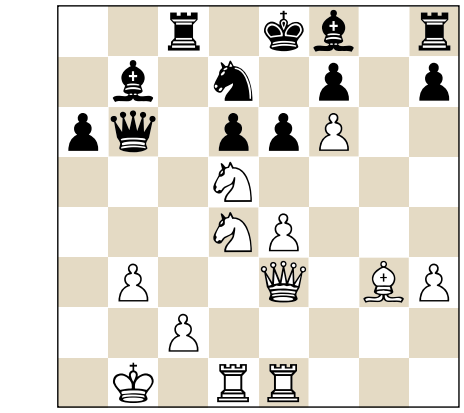


A good move, on which I spent thirty minutes.

**28...♘d7** I was worried about 28...♕b4, but then I found 29.♘f5! ♘xb3 30.♘a2! (a great move) 30...♘d2+ 31.♔a1 ♕xe4 32.♘xd6+! ♗xd6 33.♕xd2 ♖xc2 34.♕a5! ♖c5 35.♕b6, and Black is lost.

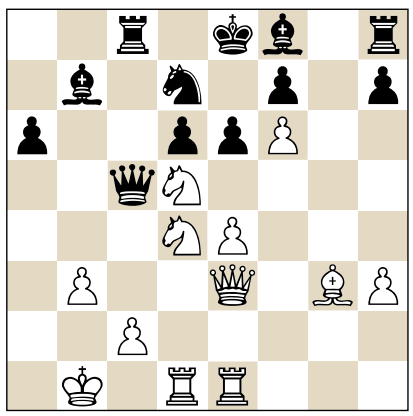
The other queen move, 28...♕a5, is met by 29.♘d5! exd5 30.exd5+ ♔d7 31.♘e6! fxe6 32.dxe6+ ♔c7 33.e7 ♗xe7 34.♕xe7+ ♔b8 35.♗xd6+ ♔a8 36.♖e5 ♕d8 37.f7 ♘d7 38.♖e6, and White wins.

**29.♘d5!**



A typical knight sacrifice.

**29...♕c5** If Black takes the piece, White will start some tactical fireworks: 29...exd5 30.exd5+ ♘e5 31.♕g5!? (the artistic way – a bit more prosaic is 31.♗xe5 dxe5 32.♕xe5+ ♔d7 33.d6 ♕c5 34.♕e2! ♗xd6 35.♘f5 ♗d5 36.♖xd5 ♕xd5 37.♖d1, and wins) 31...♔d7 32.♘e6! fxe6 33.dxe6+ ♔xe6 34.♕g4+ ♔f7 35.♖xe5, and wins.



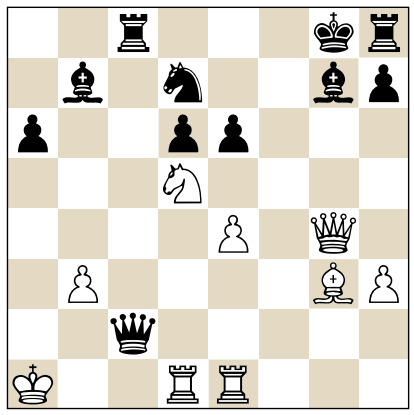
Yu Yangyi has a serious lead in development in a 'training game' with Wei Yi at the offices of the Chinese Chess Federation in Beijing.

**30.♘xe6!!** A very beautiful sacrifice of two knights in a row. This was the line that I had calculated when I decided on 29.♘d5.

**30...♕xe3**

Black cannot take on e6 (30...fxe6) because of 31.f7+ ♔xf7 32.♕f3+, and wins.

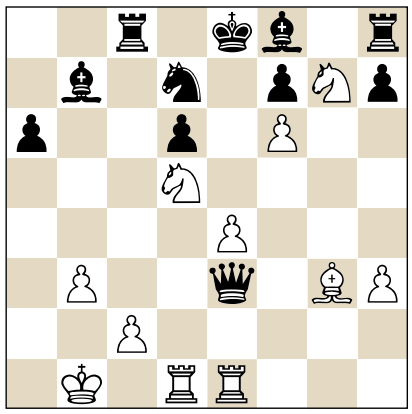
I spent a lot of time on 30...♕xc2+, until I found 31.♔a1 fxe6 32.f7+ ♔xf7 33.♕f3+ ♔g8 34.♕g4+ ♗g7+



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

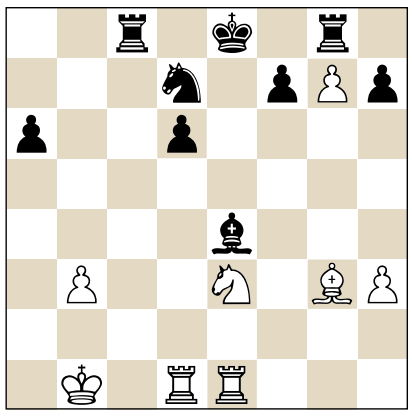
35.♘f6+!!. The cruncher. 35...♔f7 (taking the knight leads to a quick end: 35...♘xf6 36.♕xe6+ ♔f8 37.♗xd6 mate) 36.♕h5+ ♔e7 37.♗xd6+ ♔d8 38.♕a5+ ♖c7 39.♗xc7+ ♔c8 40.♖c1, and White wins.

**31.♘g7+**



In the space of three or four moves I have gained a large advantage.

**31...♗xg7 32.fxg7 ♕xb3+ 33.cxb3 ♖g8 34.♘e3 ♗xe4+**



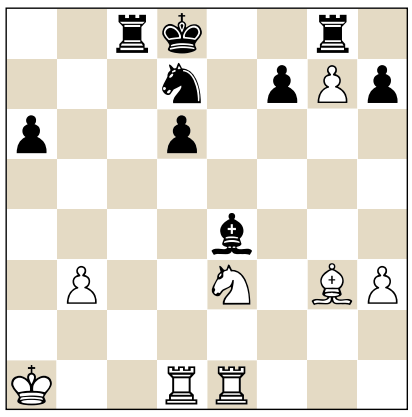
**35.♔a1?!**

White used some exchanges to cement his advantage, but this is less precise.

Instead of the text-move, I should have played 35.♔b2!, when White is winning after 35...♔d8 36.♗h4+ ♔c7 37.♖c1+ ♔b8 38.♖xc8+ ♔xc8 39.♖c1+ ♔b7 40.♘c4.

**35...♔d8**

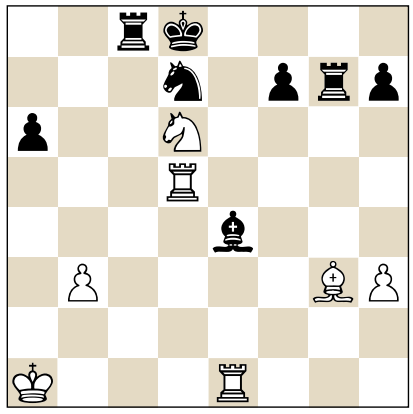
We were both running short of time.



**36.♘c4?!**

I should have played 36.♗h4+! ♔c7 37.♖c1+ ♔b8 38.♖xc8+ ♔xc8 39.♖c1+.

**36...d5 37.♘d6 ♖xg7 38.♖xd5**

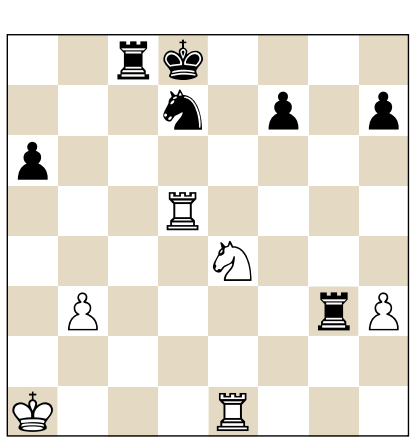


**38...♖xg3**

When you are short of time, it is difficult to calculate and take the correct decisions. And so Black went for the first option and took the bishop.

But better was 38...♗xd5 39.♖e8+ ♔c7 40.♖xc8+ ♔b6 41.♗f2+ ♔a5 42.♖c7 ♖g2 43.♗d4 ♔b4 44.♖xd7 ♔xb3 45.♘b7 ♖c2, and White's advantage is quite minimal.

**39.♘xe4**

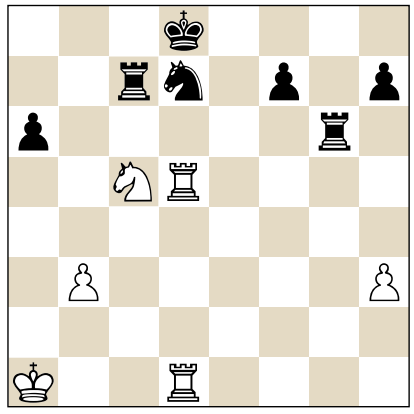


**39...♖g6?** Black misses his last chance to make a draw.

He could have done so with 39...♖f3!

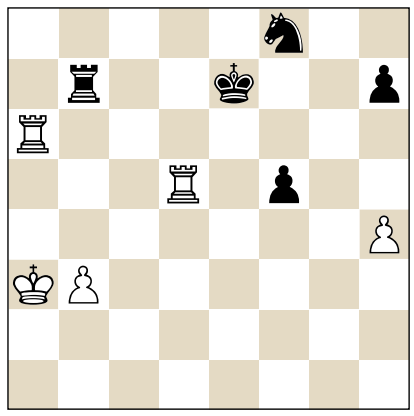
40.♖ed1 (on 40.♘d6 Black plays 40...♖cc3) 40...♖c7 41.♘c5 ♖xc5 42.♖xc5 ♖xb3 43.♖c6 a5.

**40.♖ed1 ♖c7 41.♘c5**



After the first time-control I had a huge advantage. The win was no longer difficult for me.

**41...♖xc5 42.♖xc5 ♖b6 43.♔b2 ♖b7 44.♖c6 ♔e7 45.♔a3 f5 46.♖d4 ♘e5 47.♖xa6 ♘g6 48.h4 ♘f8 49.♖d5**



Black resigned. The end.

It was a fantastic game, in which I sacrificed many pieces to gain an advantage. At the same time, my two closest pursuers both drew. There were only two rounds left, and I was one and a half points ahead. ■

**Havana 2015** — **cat. XIX**

| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | | TPR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 Yu Yangyi | IGM | CHN | 2715 | * * | 1 0 | ½ ½ | 1 1 | 1 ½ | 1 ½ | 7 | 2864 |
| 2 Dmitry Andreikin | IGM | RUS | 2718 | 0 1 | * * | ½ ½ | ½ ½ | ½ ½ | 1 ½ | 5½ | 2751 |
| 3 Pavel Eljanov | IGM | UKR | 2718 | ½ ½ | ½ ½ | * * | ½ 0 | 1 1 | 0 1 | 5½ | 2751 |
| 4 Leinier Dominguez | IGM | CUB | 2746 | 0 0 | ½ ½ | ½ 1 | * * | 1 0 | ½ ½ | 4½ | 2673 |
| 5 Ian Nepomniachtchi | IGM | RUS | 2720 | 0 ½ | ½ ½ | 0 0 | 0 1 | * * | ½ 1 | 4 | 2642 |
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# Count your blessings in the endgame

Everyone wants to improve his endgame, but where do you start? According to **Parimarjan Negi** your first step is to realize that most endgames are about calculating, calculating and calculating again!

Endgames don't enjoy the most exciting reputation. Many chess players imagine you require some 'mystical' technique, possessed by the chess veterans, to be able to play well in endgames. Therefore, they look at the endgame as an unwanted necessity – they look at a few 'technical' games, try to learn the well-known endgame positions and hope to finish their games before it ever comes to that. A lot of young players even lose interest once the endgame starts, because 'it can't become interesting with such few pieces, can it?'

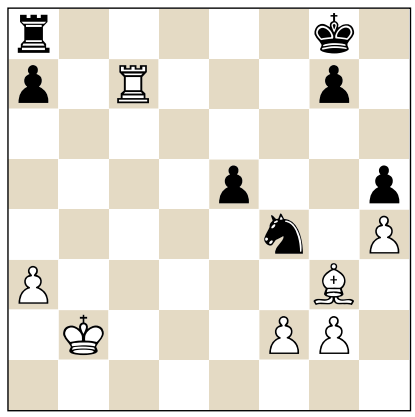
What is the best way to learn endgames is an argument that never seems to end. Even though I have read different parts of the monumental works like *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual* – I have to admit that I question its practical use. Most people need to learn *how to think* in endgames, rather than try to remember dry 'correct' techniques in the never-ending series of typical theoretical positions.

Perhaps the single most useful advice I can give for endgames is – calculate, calculate, and keep calculating. The trouble with endgames is that it often seems as if you can do anything – no one move seems to change the situation much, and we just become lazy. But it's essential to realize that most endgames are actually a minefield of tactics! Often both sides just seem to shuffle around for a while, but to find chances in an endgame, you need to be prepared to make the efforts to tease out the hidden tactical options. You've to become hyper-alert, and not bored and lazy, once the queens come off!

You'll be surprised by how much difference you can make by just calculating and being alert in the endgames. It might seem counterintuitive at first, so I'll try to explain the concept with some games.

People are always surprised when they first hear that the superb tactician Alexey Shirov is actually a great endgame player. But once you realize how critical calculating lines is for the endgames, it makes a lot more sense.

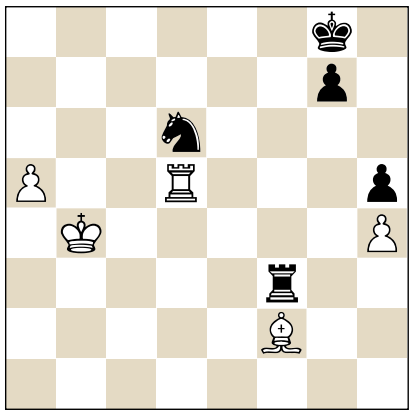
Here, I'll avoid reproducing many of his amazingly famous endgames (like the game against Topalov from Linares 1998), but instead, I found this other game that illustrates the tactical requirements quite nicely:



**Shirov-Atalik**
Jahorina 2003

White is pressing, but it's hard to say what's the best way – there seem to be far too many options.
**30.♔b3** Possibly slightly inaccurate, but it's hard to fault White for not anticipating Black's idea: **30...♖e8!** On the one hand, this doesn't look like a hard move, but giving up the a-pawn is an amazingly concrete idea that requires strong calculation and tactical foresight! If Black were to just play slowly, he wouldn't last long: **31.♖xa7 ♘xg2 32.a4 e4?** And now we see a typical mistake. Black misses his chance to force a draw with the tactically strong 32...g5! 33.hxg5 h4 34.♗h2 ♘e1!. The key idea. Without this, nothing would work for Black. But of course such ideas are very hard to see unless you're really looking for

them! Now White smoothly outplays his opponent: **33.♖c7 e3 34.fxe3 ♘xe3 35.♖c5 ♖f8 36.a5** White could have won the pawn. **36...♘f5 37.♗f2 ♘d6 38.♖d5 ♖f3+ 39.♔b4** Atalik mentions the smart 39.♔a4! as a simpler way to win. It's interesting to note that while ♔b4 doesn't seem to be any worse, the key to finding ♔a4 was to search for Black's only idea (tactical) against ♔b4.



**39...♘b7!** The last try! The rook ending was just lost for Black. **40.♗d4?** Of course Shirov had seen 40.a6, but he probably stopped after 40...♖xf2. This looks like a miraculous defence, all because of the wrongly placed king on b4. And considering it was the 40th move, it seems natural to leave it at that... But here White had the amazing 41♔b5, or even 41♔d3, as just winning! The knight is still trapped. 41.♔b5! (41.♔a3 ♖f7 42.a7 ♖f8 43.♖b5! – amazingly, no defence). **40...♘xa5!** Now it is a dead draw! **41.♖xa5 ♖f4** And Black won the h4-pawn, although Shirov miraculously won the game anyway.

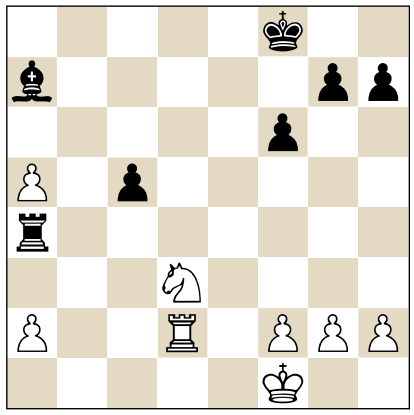
As we saw throughout the game, despite an apparently typical, slow endgame, the game was decided by purely tactical tricks from both sides. And it's important to realize that it's extremely hard for both sides to be accurate in such positions – which gives you a lot of chances in a practical game. If you stay sharp, you'll at least see some tactics that your opponent doesn't!

Of course, when we talk about endgame play, we can't leave out Magnus Carlsen. He has an unmatched level of precision, and that is what makes life so hard for his opponents in the endgame – he can navigate these tactical minefields very, very precisely!

It's hard to pick one of his many games illustrating the importance of calculation, so I'll choose one which

> 'You've to become hyper-alert, and not bored and lazy, once the queens come off!'

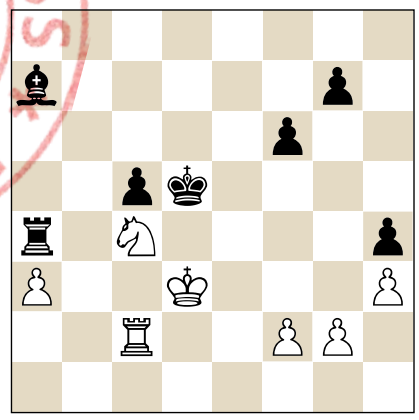
I remember watching online and being amazed by the little changes he wrought, all powered by very concrete ideas:



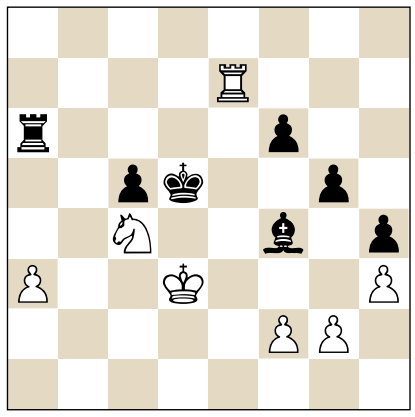
**Carlsen-Radjabov**
Stavanger 2013

The bishop on a7 isn't pleasant, but Black seems to be doing pretty well due to his active rook.

**33.♘b2!** Natural to try to put the knight on c4, but it required very precise calculation to deal with 33... ♖xa2. **33...♖xa5!** 33...♖xa2 34.♘c4 ♖a4 35.♖d8+! ♔e7 36.♖a8 ♖xc4 37.♖xa7+, and it's not a dead draw yet – which is all White is aiming at. **34.♘c4 ♖a4 35.♖c2** At least now White can aim at a good knight versus bad bishop dichotomy... **35...♔e7 36.♔e2 ♔e6 37.♔d3 ♔d5 38.a3 h5 39.h3 h4**



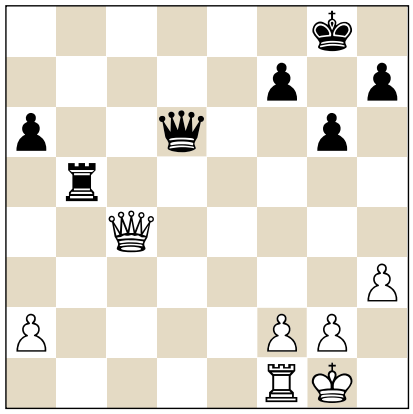
It doesn't look as if White will be able to improve at all, because none of his pieces can really move, but Carlsen amazingly sees that if any of Black's pieces moves, then he'll be able to improve his position! Not an idea you will notice if you aren't very alert: **40.♖c1! g6 41.♖c2 g5 42.♖c1** Black is forced to play: **42...♖a6 43.♖e1 ♗b8** 43...♖a4 44.♖e8!, a nice little tactic to defend the c4-knight. **44.♖e7** Black could defend more accurately, but we aren't here to study this game precisely. Instead, it's crucial to realize how White slowly, move by accurate move, increases the pressure: **44...♗f4** After 44...♗e5 45.a4 ♗d4 46.♖e2 ♗e5 47.a5 ♗d4 I don't see how White can make any progress.



**45.♔c3!** Intending …♔b3 and ...a4. **45...f5** The defence was already difficult, and Black finds an interesting but desperate way to create counterplay. **46.♔b3 g4 47.a4 gxh3 48.gxh3 ♖g6** Black is desperate for counterplay of his own. **49.a5 ♖g1 50.a6 ♖b1+** Another critical position. Now it's Magnus's turn to slip up a little: **51.♔c3?!** 51.♔a2! seems more precise, but it's not completely certain: 51...♖b4 52.♘e3+ ♗xe3 53.♖xe3

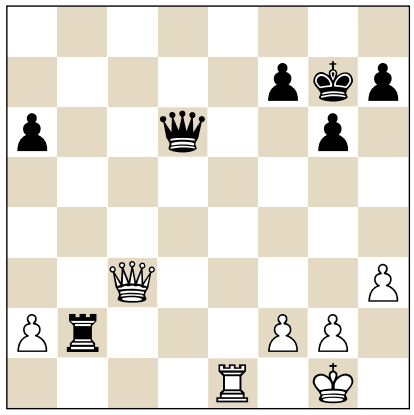
♖b8 54.a7 ♖a8 55.♖a3, and White should have great winning chances. **51...♖c1+ 52.♔d3 ♖d1+ 53.♔e2 ♖a1 54.♘b6+ ♔d6 55.♖g7 ♔c6 56.♖g6+ ♔b5 57.♘d5** White is keeping the a6-pawn alive in a very precarious way... but the pressure continues. **57...♗e5?** Finally, Black steps on one of the many landmines! **58.♖b6+ ♔c4 59.♘e3+ ♔c3 60.f4!** The hidden idea he had obviously missed. **60...♗d4 61.♘xf5** And Magnus went on to win.

It took me a long time to understand the importance of calculating, but once you realize it, it's so much easier to play endgame positions. You don't have to worry about your bad technique or lack of experience – just keep counting moves, even if there doesn't seem to be much going on in the position.



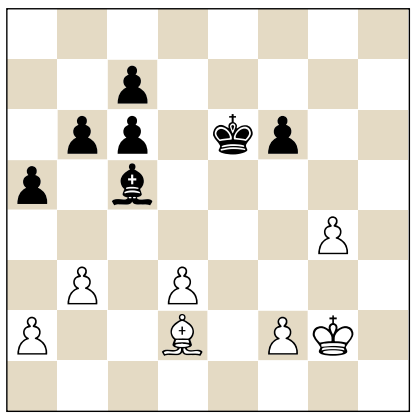
**Sarkar-Negi**
Arlington 2013

At first, this position seems just a draw, but I needed a win to win the event... So it was time to search for the slightest ray of hope:
**29...♖b2!?** Avoiding an instant draw. As long as there is no forced draw, a lot of things can happen. **30.♖e1** It important to realize that this is actually a very concrete move – the idea is to meet ♕d2 with ♖e8+ and ♕c5! – reversing the position... But it's also easy to prevent that idea: **30...♔g7! 31.♕c3+?!** White needed to find the precise idea 31.a3! here. The tactics aren't so hard – ♕a3 can be met by ♕d4! – but it's looking for these precise details in such a harmless-looking position that is actually tough for the defender. Since Black can't take ♕xa3, the ♕c4 will be freed from the job of defending the a2-pawn, and it should be easy to hold.



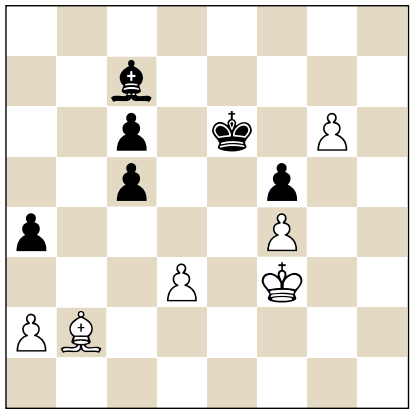
**31...♕f6! 32.♕xf6+ ♔xf6** This endgame is not so easy for White. I don't know what's the assessment if he just passively defends the a-pawn with the rook, but it doesn't look too much fun. And if he gives the a-pawn, as he did in the game – then of course he has to suffer for a long time. Eventually, I did win this, but the game is too long to reproduce here anyway.

As said, games that seem to be going in a boring shuffle-your-pieces way are often decided by very tactical details, rather than exquisite technique. So, both as a defender, and attacker, you've got to keep your eyes peeled for such details.



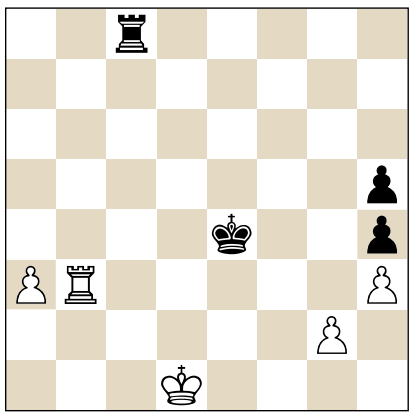
**Negi-Kayumov**
Dubai 2011

This looks like a typical, slow and technical endgame – but there were a lot of crucial concrete ideas that defined the rest of the game:
**35.♗f4!?** The idea is basically that after 35♗d6 – he can never take the bishop on f4, because Black can't create a passed pawn on the queenside. Therefore, I could continue improving with ♔f3 etc.; even though it's impossible to assess the position, it's quite enough to keep playing. **35...♔d7 36.♔f3 b5 37.♗g3 a4** He has to do something. **38.bxa4 bxa4 39.♔e4 ♔e6 40.f3 ♗b6 41.♗f4 c5** His set-up might look bad, but actually it's kind of hard to break through. The following moves just represented a typical shuffle-around period: **42.♗e3 c6 43.♗g1 ♗a7 44.♗f2 ♗b6 45.♗g1 ♗a7 46.f4 ♗b6 47.♗e3 ♗a7 48.♗c1 ♗b6 49.♗a3** I am sure I had some weird, deep idea, but I don't remember it. **49...♗a7 50.g5 f5+ 51.♔f3 ♗b6 52.♗b2 ♗c7 53.g6**



**53...♗a5!** Just preventing the only way the White king could have penetrated. **54.♔e2 ♗b4 55.♗e5 ♗a5 56.♔d1 ♗b4 57.♔c2** It doesn't look as if much is happening, and Black continues to play on auto-pilot mode, but he completely misses my idea: **57...♔e7?** 57...♗a3!. It seems very counterintuitive to allow ♔c3, but Black has a precise way to keep his position together! 58.♔c3 ♗c1 59.♔c4 ♗e3!. **58.♔b2!** That was my idea all along. **58...♔e6?** The final mistake – he completely fails to see what I wanted to do. 58...c4! 59.dxc4 ♔f8 would require a lot of technical debate to decide whether White's winning or not. **59.♗c3!** And by being too careless, he has stepped on the mine! **59...♔e7 60.a3 ♗xc3+ 61.♔xc3 ♔f6 62.♔c4** And White won.

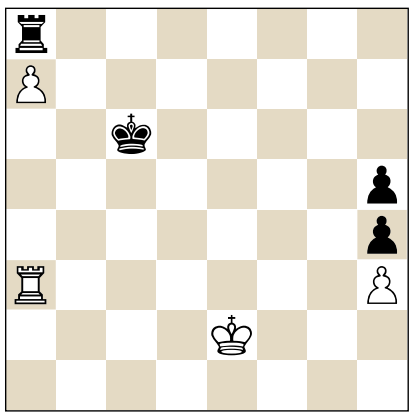
This game went nicely for me, but it was largely thanks to my opponent's lack of attention. In the next one, it was my opponent who got saved due to my carelessness.



**Negi-Kovalyov**
Leon 2012

**58.a4** I get the famed rook behind the passed pawn – and I thought it was the end of a long and fruitful endgame... **58...♖g8 59.a5 ♖xg2 60.♖a3 ♔d5 61.a6 ♖g8 62.a7 ♖a8** The rook can't move. Should be an easy job to just collect the h-pawns, right?

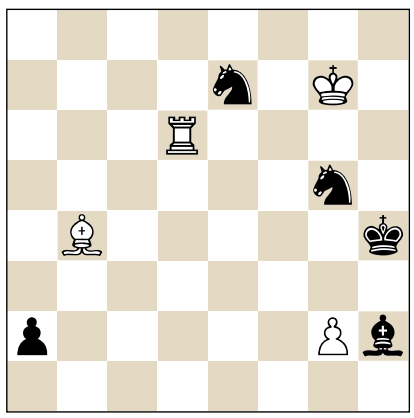
**63.♔e2 ♔c6**



**64.♔f3??**
I'm going after the kingside pawns, so somehow I automatically wanted to move closer to them! But this allows a dramatic save.
64.♔e3! was the last accurate move I needed – not allowing Black to cut off my king with a check. OK, maybe I'll still need to be careful about winning this – you never know how these rook endings go – but it seems quite close, as after 64...♔b7 65.♔f4 ♖f8+ 66.♔g5 ♔a8 67.♖a5, I should win both h-pawns, and the black king is so far away. **64...♖f8+!** And the white king will be cut off. **65.♔e4 ♔b7** Amazingly, White isn't in time after 66.a8♕, so I had to try: **66.♔e5 ♔a8 67.♖a4 ♖f7 68.♖xh4 ♖xa7** But now my king isn't perfect either, and Black made it back in time and drew.

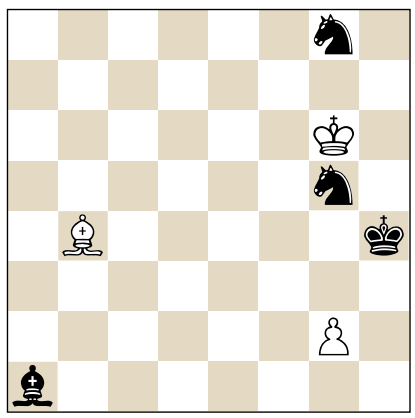
Once again, we see how it's the tiniest inaccuracies that can completely swing the result of the game. Of course, I'll emphasize again that calculation is not the only thing that makes or breaks an endgame player, but it's by far the most crucial. It's also not so hard to improve – all you need to do is stay alert and keep calculating – you might not play the endgame as well as a GM, but you will play it as well as you could have.

Eventually, I'd like to talk about training yourself to improve in this regard. I find endgame compositions to be an excellent way to train yourself in trying to calculate lines, navigate the endgame minefield, and in general improve your all-round creativity. There are many beautiful examples of studies, but I'll just present one to show its potential as a training tool:



**D. Petrov**
Shakhmaty v SSSR 1934

The first thing is just to take in the craziness you see in the position and find order and logic in it. After looking a bit, you will see that the problem revolves around Black winning the rook due to the ♗e5+ idea – and that White's king has no good square, so Black will be able to get the e7-knight away from being under attack. Then it's time to try to solve it, mixing different moves and ideas and, most importantly, calculating very, very precisely. Since you know it's a study, there are a lot of useful heuristics you can use: moves must be forcing, thus you can discard lines that definitely don't work. Also stalemate ideas must be there. **1.♖a6 ♗e5+ 2.♔h6** Study aficionados will easily recognize the idea of bringing the king to the corner and hoping for stalemate ideas... **2...a1♕ 3.♖xa1 ♘g8+! 4.♔g6 ♗xa1**



**5.g3+!** This is the key idea. **5...♔g4 6.♗c3! ♗xc3** And stalemate!

Of course solving studies on a one-off basis will not help you much, but if you do a lot of these, you will start noticing the improvement in your calculations, particularly in endgames. You will find studies for all levels – there are various online sources, including big database collections. You can also try to do some positions just for the pleasure of it – some studies – for instance by Israeli composer Afek – are just so beautiful by themselves even if you can't solve them...

## Conclusion

The trick is to keep calculating even when everything might appear to be just 'too normal' or symmetrical. Which essentially is just stay alert – you lose most endgames just by carelessness! It may sound simple, but it's of course very hard to master. The first step is to realize what you're supposed to do, and then, slowly, you'll start getting better at it. ■

Anish Giri: 'In hindsight, there was not much intrigue, as we won all our matches; but there were enough moments when things didn't look all that clear.'

# Having fun in France

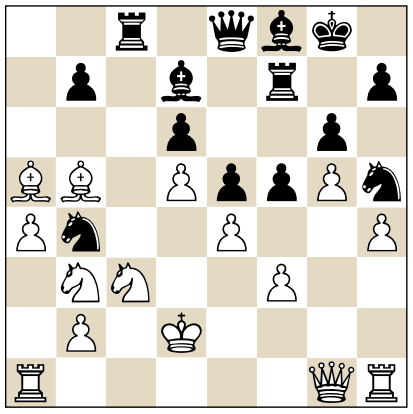
On the eve of Norway Chess, **Anish Giri**, eager to forget a depressing drawing rut in the final leg of the Grand Prix, took part in the French Club Teams Championship – a felicitous decision. His team claimed the 'Top 12', and freely collecting points left and right, our contributing editor scored the best individual result.

At a point when my schedule for the year 2015 looked pretty empty, I happily accepted an invitation to play for the French club of Bischwiller in the finals of the French League, the 'Top 12'. In the months that followed, my schedule got fuller and fuller, and by now it is a chaotic mess with tournaments popping up non-stop (true, I happily did this to myself and I am not going to have any regrets).

As it was, the French league sat tightly wedged in between the Khanty-Mansiysk Grand Prix and the Norway Chess tournament. As the day when I was about to leave for the Côte d'Azur (well, close to the Côte, anyway) approached, I couldn't help but fear that I had bitten off more than I could chew. These worries proved unfounded and our stay in the lovely town of Le Grau-du-Roi was a very pleasant experience, both for me

and for the whole team of Bischwiller. The Top 12 is a round-robin with the 12 strongest French teams. Of the eight boards, three are reserved for French players and one for a French female player. Our team was one of the favourites, with Etienne Bacrot, Arkadij Naiditsch and your reporter in the line-up, but our average strength was lower than the top favourites of Clichy, who had hotshots like Wesley So and Dmitry Jakovenko on board. In hindsight, there was not much intrigue, as we won all our matches; but there were enough moments when things didn't look all that clear.

We started with three dull wins against weaker teams, but yours truly had quite an eventful start, to put it mildly.



**Giri-Iordachescu**
France 2015 (1)

This position was reached from a King's Indian. My attempt to limit Black's play on the kingside has failed. Not only has he achieved the desirable ...f5 break, he has also managed to transfer the knight to an ideal position on h5. In return I have come up with the strange idea of ♔d2, ♕g1, ♗b6, winning a pawn that nobody cares about.

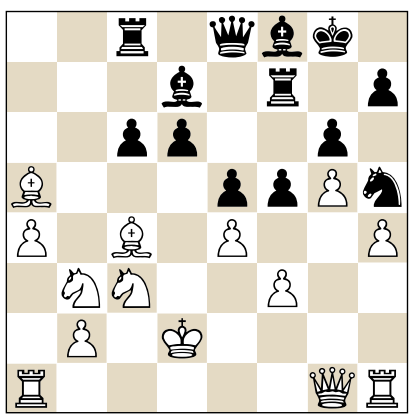
**23...♘c6!?**

This obviously came as a surprise, but not such an unpleasant one. I was pretty concerned about the simple retreat to a6, and although I felt that this move was very unpleasant too, with more time on the clock I was hoping to navigate the complications better than my opponent.

So, called for was 23...♘a6, followed by an annoying invasion to f4. It is far from deadly, but pretty unpleasant. The position is balanced.

**24.dxc6 bxc6 25.♗c4**

I didn't want to get steamrolled, so this was the obvious choice.

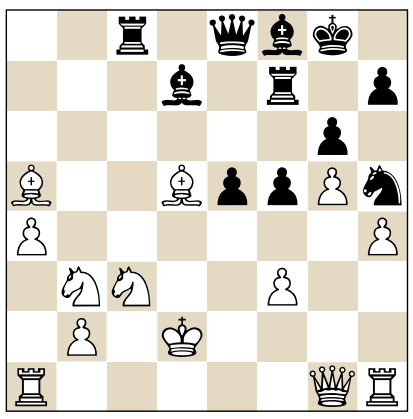


**25...d5?**

25...fxe4! was an important inclusion that I underestimated. The f5-square is of great importance in the complications after 26.fxe4 d5! 27.exd5 cxd5 28.♗xd5 ♘f4 (the simple 28...♗e6 is good too, but this one is flashier) 29.♗xf7+ ♕xf7 – I am afraid to analyse it any further. I wouldn't be surprised if White is busted here, with his extra rook. My extra rook.

25...♗e6 is what I had expected, when after 26.♗xe6 ♕xe6 Black has positional compensation, but White's position looks pretty stable after 27.♔c2!.

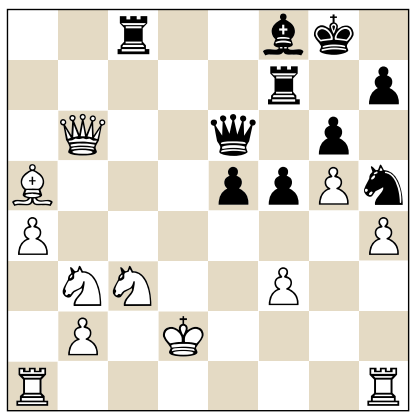
**26.exd5 cxd5 27.♗xd5**



**27...♗e6** 27...♘f4 was a better practical chance, but without the f5-square for the bishop, it's not as powerful: 28.♗xf7+ ♕xf7 29.♔c2.

**28.♗xe6 ♕xe6 29.♕b6!**

And now it became clear that I was going to consolidate and that then the piece would count.



**29...♕c4 30.♕b5 ♕f4+ 31.♔c2 ♘g3 32.♖hd1 ♕xf3 33.♕xe5 ♘e4 34.♕e6 ♕g2+ 35.♔b1 ♖c6 36.♕e5 ♖c4 37.♕d5 ♖c8 38.♘xe4 fxe4 39.♔a2 ♗g7 40.♖d2 ♕f3 41.♖e1**

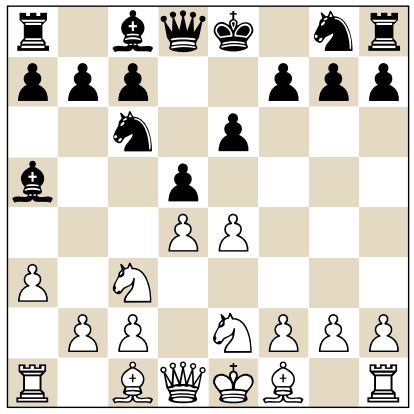
Black resigned.

But the next day this happened:

FR 8.4 – C15
**Yuri Solodovnichenko**
**Anish Giri**
France 2015 (2)

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘e2 ♘c6 5.a3 ♗a5**

Our lunch took too long. This is the only excuse I have for preparing such rubbish for this game.



**6.b4!?**

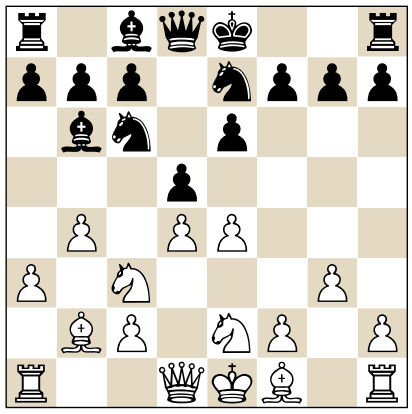
I underestimated this push. It made me think of Kramnik's win over Debashis in Qatar, where the naive Indian weakened his queenside in the symmetrical Berlin. Here it's not such a big concession, though.

6.e5 is what I had been expecting.

**6...♗b6 7.♗b2**

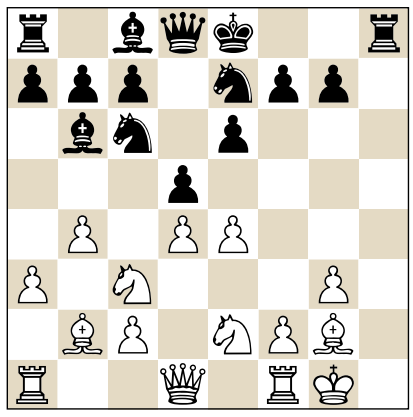
Now I spent a lot of time thinking and realized that White's position is pretty risk-free. I have no way to exploit his weaknesses.

**7...♘ge7 8.g3**



**8...h5?** I was calculating normal continuations and they didn't seem too exciting. I was hoping my opponent would spend time thinking whether to reply h4 or h3 and then I might have some extra resources after pushing ...e5. However, my opponent ignored my h-pawn without much hesitation. Better was 8...e5! 9.dxe5 ♘xe5 10.♗g2 ♘c4 11.♗c1. This position didn't appeal to me, but in fact I just have to give up the pawn: 11...0-0 12.exd5 ♘g6 13.0-0 ♖e8, with great compensation. Unfortunately, during the game I didn't realize that it was full compensation.

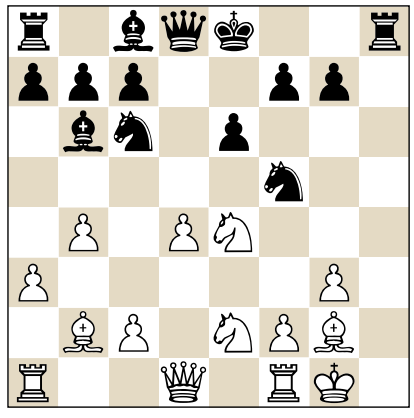
**9.♗g2! h4 10.0-0 hxg3 11.hxg3**



I assumed I might get my queen to the h-file, but here I realized there was no way to do it. Still, the move I made is just losing.

**11...dxe4 12.♘xe4 ♘f5**

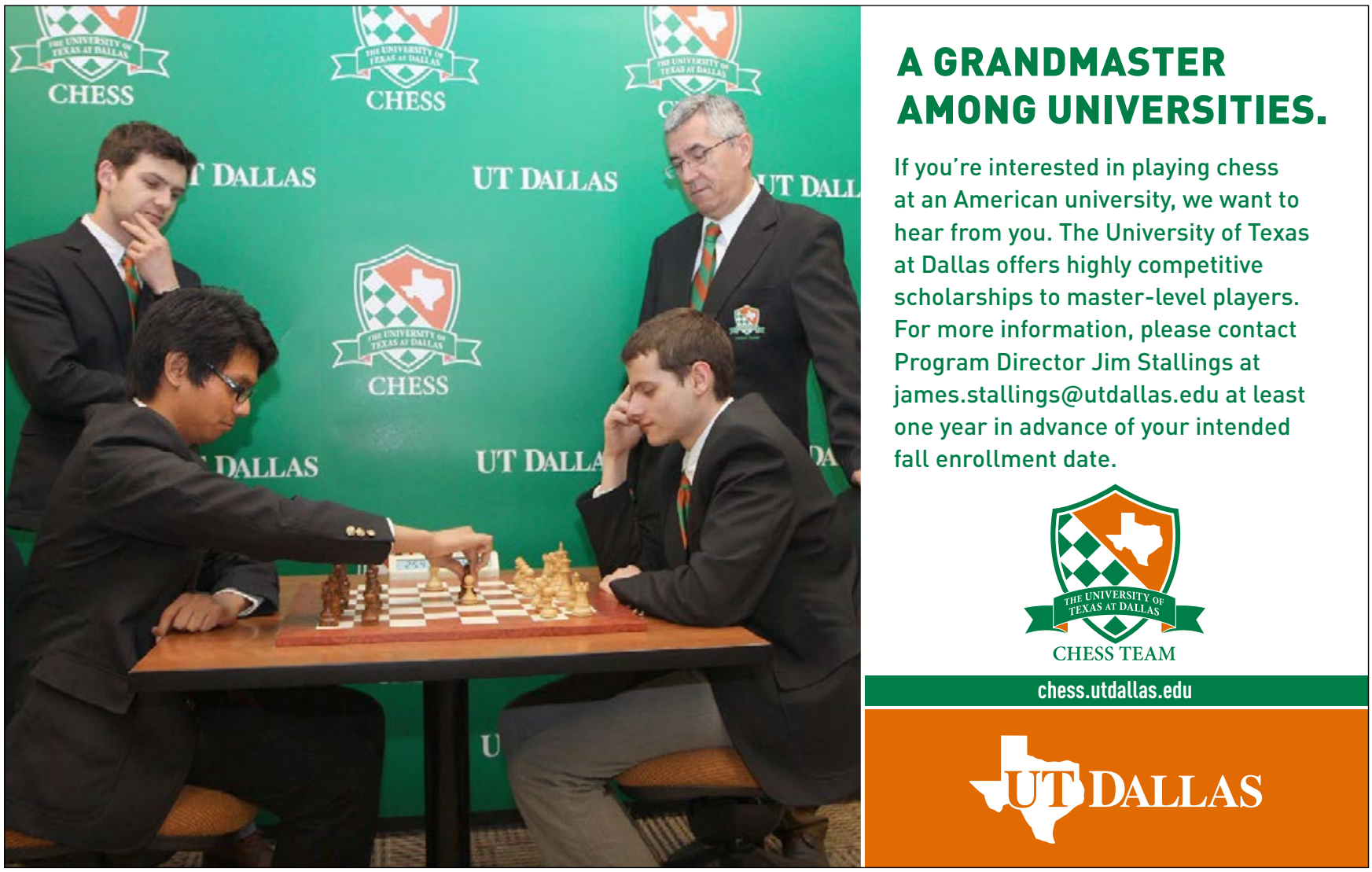
I was planning to offer a draw after 13.c3 ♘ce7. True, my position is poor, but it is still quite solid and 200 elo points might be of some influence here. Nope.



**13.c4!** Brutal.

**13...♗xd4 14.♘xd4 ♘cxd4 15.♖e1!**

I am not losing a piece with g4 yet, but now it's a deadly threat.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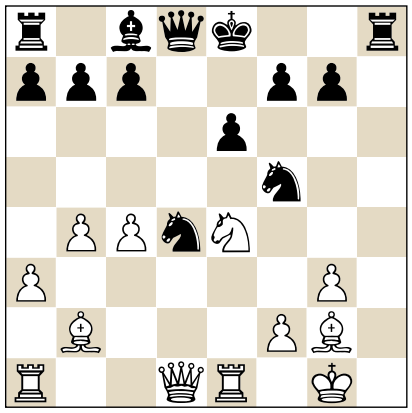


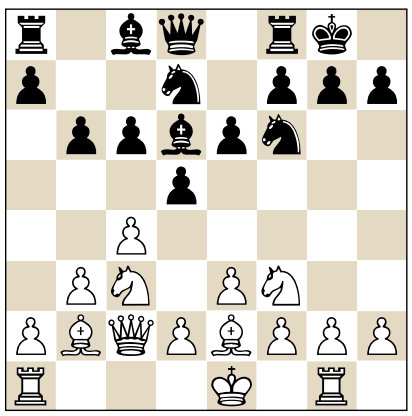
**15...e5 16.♘c5!**
And as bad as it looks, the position is in fact even worse. White duly won.

My next game, however, couldn't have gone better.

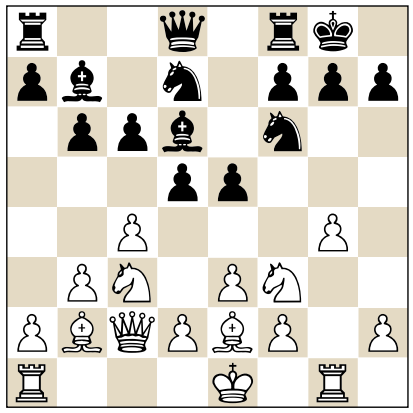
RE 7.16 – A11
**Anish Giri**
**Bart Michiels**
France 2015 (3)

There were a lot of tempting options to get a slight plus against Belgian grandmaster Bart Michiels, but I decided to play some real chess for once.

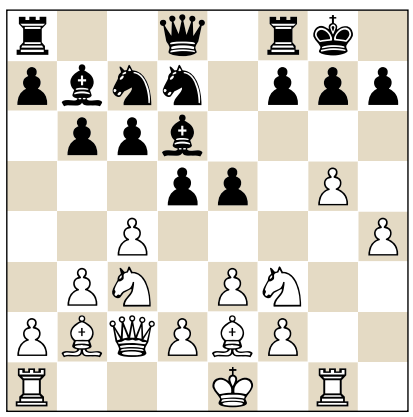
**1.c4 c6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♕c2 ♘bd7 6.b3 ♗d6 7.♗b2 0-0 8.♗e2 b6 9.♖g1!?**
The idea of pushing g4 in the Slav or Anti-Slav is not new. Pushing g4 right away, though, would give Black the option to just capture the pawn.



**9...♗b7 10.g4 e5**
This seems to be the most principled. The rule is that against a flank attack you have to counterattack in the centre. But here White doesn't have a pawn on d4, so the counterattack is not too impressive yet.

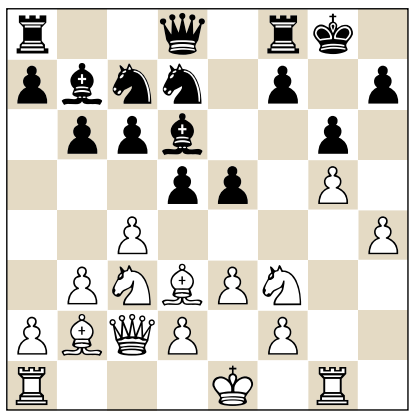


**11.g5 ♘e8 12.h4 ♘c7**
This position wasn't entirely new to me, but here I realized the overwhelming amount of options that I had, which led me to spend a fair share of my time choosing.
12...e4 13.♘d4 ♗e5 makes sense and was played in Papin-Ter Sahakyan, 2013.



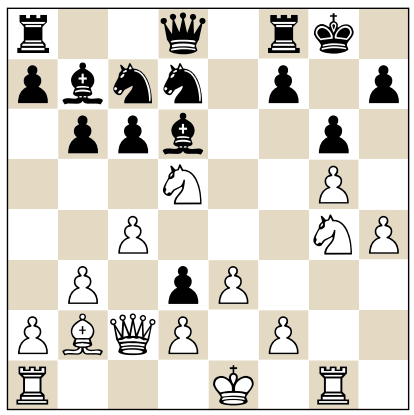
**13.♗d3!?**
Nothing was wrong with the obvious 13.h5, but I wanted to avoid the options of ..e4 or ...f5, just in case.

**13...g6**
13...e4? is pretty bad. After 14.♘xe4! dxe4 15.♗xe4 the bishops are monsters and the black king's pawn shelter is going to be destroyed.



**14.h5**

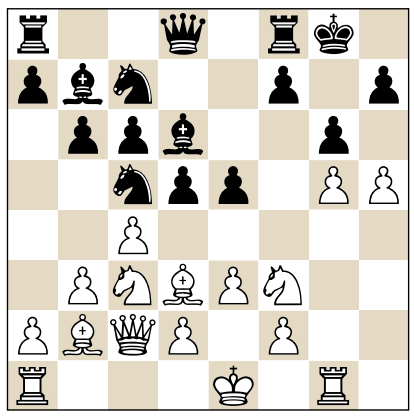
14.♘h2 was very tempting, too, but I couldn't calculate the variations to the end and decided not to burn any bridges yet. After 14.♘h2 play can continue 14...e4 15.♘g4 exd3 16.♘xd5, and now Black has two ways to defend:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

– 16...♗e5!? 17.♗xe5 ♘xe5 18.♘df6+ ♔h8 19.♕c3 ♘f3+ 20.♔f1 ♘xg1 21.♔xg1, with long-term compensation for almost a full rook! E.g. 21...♘e6 22.f4! c5 23.♔f2!.
– 16...♖e8 is a bit simpler: 17.♕c3 ♗e5 18.♘xe5 ♘xd5 19.cxd5 ♘xe5 20.f4 ♕xd5 21.fxe5 ♖e6, and Black has blocked the diagonal.

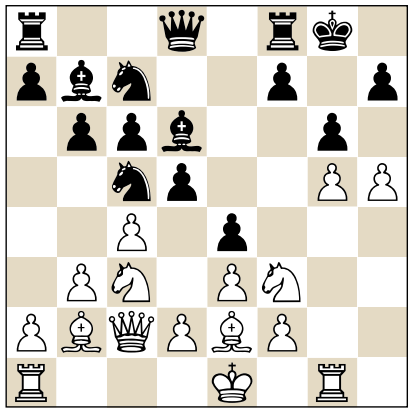
**14...♘c5** From this point on my opponent started playing the most direct moves, but it turns out that it won't really work, move by move. That's what I know now, but during the game there was a lot of stuff that had to be calculated and assessed.
14...♕e8 can be met with my favourite move 15.♘h2!.
14...♕e7 can also be met with 15.♘h2, but even more logical is 15.♘h4!?, intending to sacrifice on g6.



**15.♗e2**

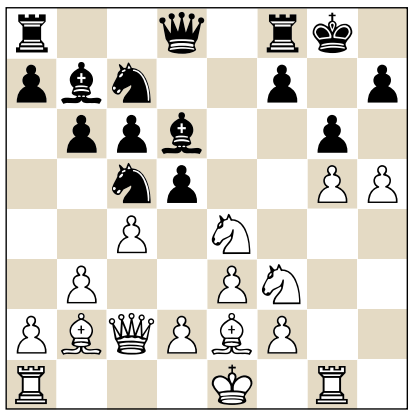
I have lost a tempo with the bishop, but d4 is sort of a threat now, opening up the long diagonal.

**15...e4** There are lots of alternatives, but this is the most critical one. Now, if I play the automatic 16.♘d4 or 16.♘h4, Black has 16...♗e5, neutralizing the pressure along the long diagonal, and having solved his problems, he is ready to take over. Something had to be done here.



**16.♘xe4!** Spectacular and strong. It took me a while to calculate the most important variations, but I was feeling somewhat insecure and wouldn't have been surprised at this point if I had missed some resource from my opponent.

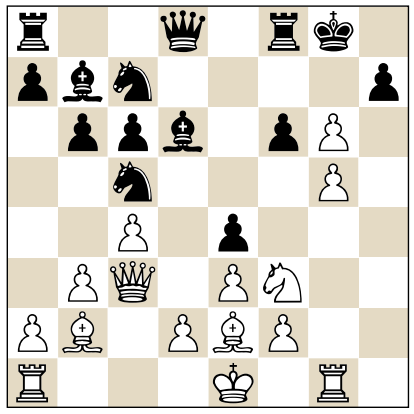
16.♘xd5? is not the same, as after 16...cxd5 17.♕c3 Black has a very strong intermediate move: 17...d4! 18.♕xd4 f6 19.hxg6 ♘7e6!, and White's attack doesn't work here: 20.gxh7+ ♔xh7 21.♕c3 exf3.



**16...♘xe4**

Here I noticed that I had missed something important, which indeed occurred in the game, but fortunately it wasn't as good for my opponent as it had seemed.

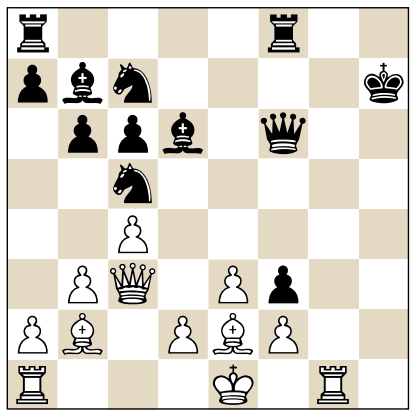
I was mostly focusing on 16...dxe4 17.♕c3 f6 (now it's important to take on g6 first) 18.hxg6! (18.gxf6 doesn't work: 18...♕xf6 19.♕xf6 ♖xf6 20.♗xf6 exf3 21.♗xf3 ♖f8!), and now:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

– 18...hxg6 – Black defends from mate, but now the endgame is bad: 19.gxf6 ♕xf6 20.♕xf6 ♖xf6 21.♗xf6 exf3 22.♗xf3, and the inclusion of hxg6 hxg6 proves essential: 22...♔f7 23.♗c3, with a horrible position for Black – ♔e2 and ♖h1 will follow.

– 18...exf3 is obviously losing, but for some reason it took me a while to find the mate here: 19.gxf6 ♕xf6 20.gxh7+ ♔xh7. For a moment I didn't see the way to mate here, but then it dawned on me:

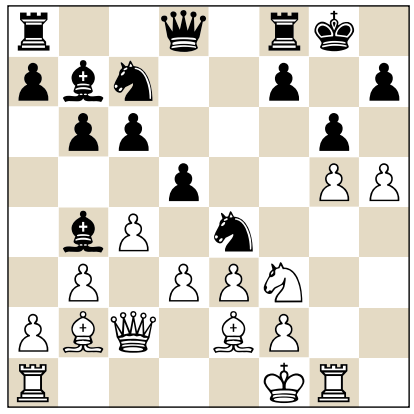


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

21.♕c2+ ♕f5 22.♖g7+ ♔h6 23.0-0-0!! (what a move, and the only one too!) 23...♕xc2+ 24.♔xc2 ♖f5 25.♖h1+ ♖h5 26.♖hg1! ♖f5 27.♗xf3, and it's just mate.

**17.d3** A nice idea. The knight has to guard the c3-square and after **17...♗b4+ 18.♔f1** the knight still can't go back because now the b4-bishop will be trapped with a3-b4.

This motif was familiar to me from my game against Mamedyarov in the Tashkent Grand Prix.

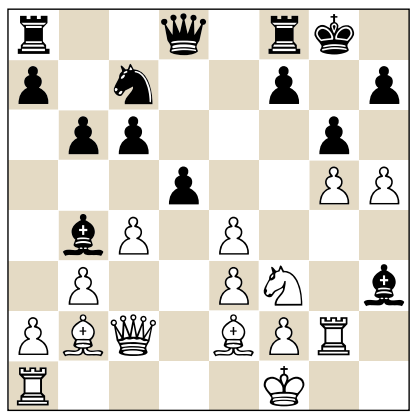


**18...♗c8?**

This was a shot that I had missed, but fortunately the exchange that I will lose is of very little importance.

In fact, the alternative, 18...♘xf2!, was stronger. Softening up the e3-pawn felt more unpleasant to me. However, the follow-up to this move is not so easy: 19.♔xf2. Now it appears that White has too many threats: a3!, followed by ♕c3, and ♘e5, followed by ♘g4, is not bad either. Black has a powerful reply, though: 19...♖e8!. Now 20.a3 is met by 20...♗c5! and 20.♘e5 by 20...d4!! 21.♗xd4 ♘e6!, with counterplay. White has to play a slow, multipurpose move, slowly building up the attack: 20.♖g2!, freeing the path for the other rook to join the attack on the h-file: 20...♗c5 21.d4 ♗f8 22.♖h1, and White's attack is about to start anew, with ♘e5, ♗d3 and so on. Thus it can be concluded that the 15...e4 push hadn't worked.

**19.dxe4 ♗h3+ 20.♖g2**



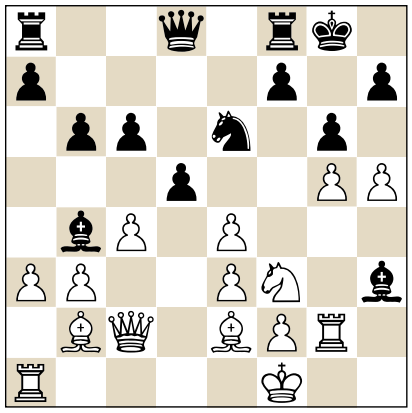
It doesn't take long to realize that Black is in trouble. It was a little

annoying, though, that I would have to spend a move to force Black to capture my rook.

**20...♘e6** Black had some alternatives, but all of them are just as bad. 20...d4 is advised by the machine, but after 21.exd4!? ♘e6 22.♕c1 I wouldn't wish this position as Black on my greatest enemy.

**21.a3!**

Asking some unpleasant questions.



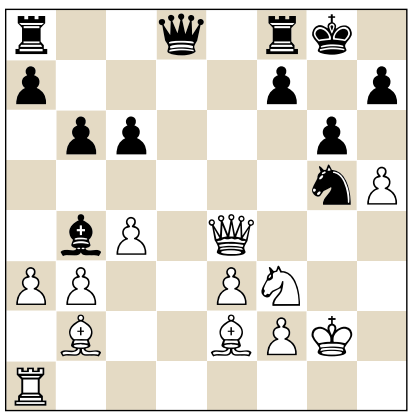
**21...dxe4**

21...♗e7 blocks the view for the queen, when I planned 22.exd5 cxd5 23.♖d1, with an overwhelming advantage.

21...♗d6 doesn't work either: 22.exd5 cxd5 23.cxd5 ♖c8 24.♕d3 ♘xg5, and now the easiest way to win material is 25.hxg6! hxg6 26.♕d4 f6 27.♘xg5 ♗xg2+ 28.♔xg2 ♗e5 29.♕e4.

**22.♕xe4 ♗xg2+ 23.♔xg2 ♘xg5**

For a second it seems as if Black is still in the game, but one precise move and it's over.



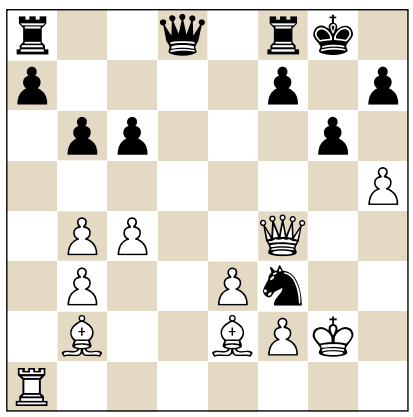
**24.♕f4!** The queen has to be near the e5-square. **24...♘xf3** On 24...♗e7 25.♖d1 ♘e6 26.♕e5 wins.

**25.axb4**

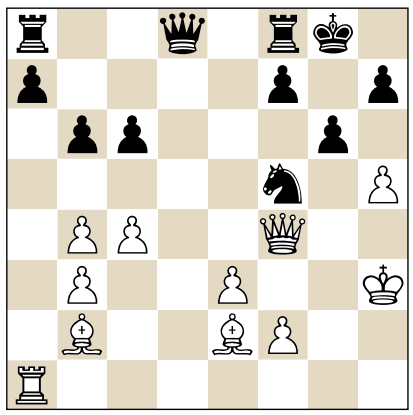
The other capture was winning too,

'Le Grau-du-Roi, close to the Côte d'Azur and not bad either.'

but I was hoping my opponent would give me a chance to sacrifice a queen in the variation further down in the comments to move 25.



**25...♘g5** I was hoping to end the game with a queen sacrifice, but winning is the most important thing in the game of chess, so I had to calculate this move as well. However, after 25...♘h4+ 26.♔h3 ♘f5 it would have been very sweet to go



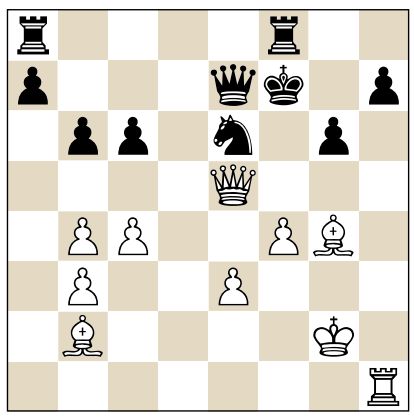
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

27.♕xf5!.

**26.hxg6! fxg6 27.♕e5 ♔f7**

This obviously can't work; the mate finds itself here.

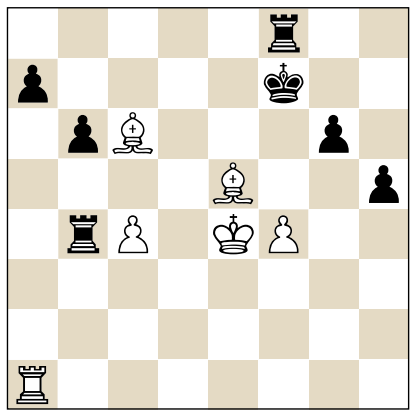
**28.f4! ♘e6 29.♗g4 ♕e7 30.♖h1**



**30...♘xf4+** Black gets to an endgame, but a totally hopeless one. After 30...h5 White might play 31.♖xh5!?.

**31.exf4 ♕xe5 32.♗xe5! h5 33.♗f3 ♖ad8 34.♗xc6 ♖d2+ 35.♔f3 ♖d3+ 36.♔e4 ♖xb3 37.♖a1 ♖xb4**

Kindly allowing the mate.



**38.♖xa7+ ♔e6 39.♗d5** Mate.

Our battle in Round 4 against Châlons was hard-fought, but that could not be said about my game. The ambitious Spaniard Ivan Salgado Lopez decided to repeat moves against my Najdorf (6.♗e3 ♘g4 7.♗c1 ♘f6 8.♗e3 etc) and the game ended in 10 moves The plan was not to feel bad about it, but I still did. The next round I decided to skip the rest day that was planned for me and won my game against young French GM Adrien Demuth pretty easily.

The 5th round was an important day for us, as we were facing Clichy. They had messed up their line-up for the occasion, which meant that on first board I was facing out-of-form Laurent Fressinet, who I managed to beat. Things would still have been fine for Clichy, had Jakovenko not lost with white against our comeback hero Etienne Bacrot, who started the tournament very badly. Dmitry went all out against Etienne, playing h4 and g4 in the opening, which is perhaps not entirely consistent with his refined positional style. This was obviously an important victory for us, although we still had two more key matches ahead of us.

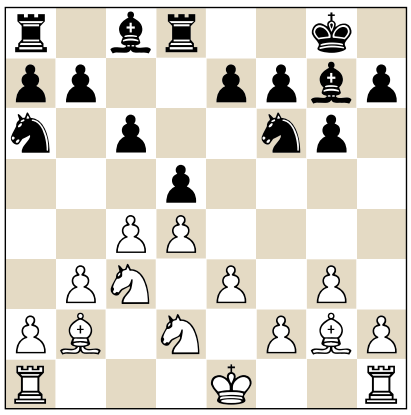
But we had become invincible and kept deciding matches in our favour. In the penultimate round, I won a nice endgame against Igor Nataf in the match against Strasbourg.

**France 2015**

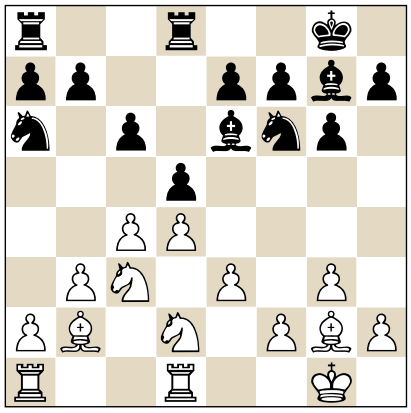
| | | MP | BP |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Bischwiller | 22 | 59½ |
| 2 | Clichy | 20 | 60½ |
| 3 | Bois-Colombes | 17 | 55 |
| 4 | Strasbourg | 14 | 46½ |
| 5 | Evry | 14 | 44 |
| 6 | Mulhouse | 12 | 49½ |
| 7 | Montpellier | 10 | 40½ |
| 8 | Châlons-en-Champagne | 9 | 43 |
| 9 | Vandœuvre-lès-Nancy | 6 | 38 |
| 10 | Metz | 4 | 36½ |
| 11 | Grasse | 4 | 35 |
| 12 | Poitiers-Migné-Auxances | 0 | 20 |

EO 64.3 – E60
**Anish Giri**
**Igor-Alexandre Nataf**
France 2015 (10)

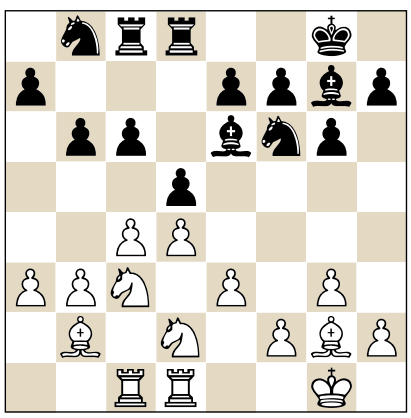
**1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2 c6 5.b3 0-0 6.♗b2 d6 7.d4 ♕a5+ 8.♕d2!? ♕xd2+ 9.♘fxd2!? d5 10.♘c3 ♖d8 11.e3 ♘a6**



**12.0-0!?** After 12.♗a3, 12...e5! is strong. **12...♗e6** Better was 12...♘b4!. **13.♖fd1**



**13...♖ac8** And here, too, 13...♘b4! was better. **14.a3! b6 15.♖ac1 ♘b8** Black has played quite passively and should stand slightly worse, but now he is possiby planning ...c5.



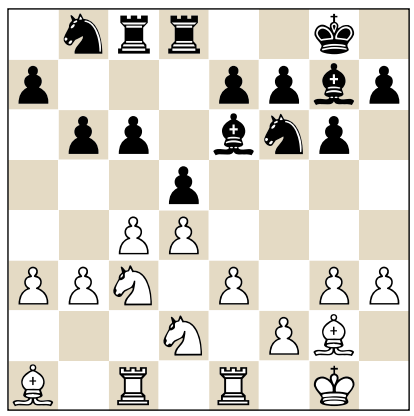
**16.♗a1!**

A nice prophylactic move. The bishop is now protected in all the variations starting with ...c5.

**16...♗g4! 17.♖e1 ♗e6 18.♘e2 ♗f5 19.♘c3!**

It's always good to admit your mistakes before it's too late.

**19...♗e6 20.h3**

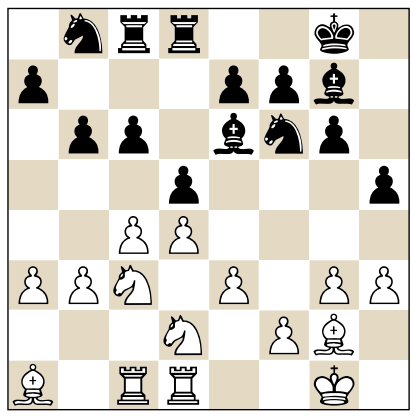


**20...h5** 20...c5!? leads to a slightly worse structure, but if Black was ever planning to play it, it had to be done here. After 21.dxc5 bxc5 22.♘a4 it's plus equal.

> 'Rooks aren't the best pieces when it comes to fianchettoing.'

**21.♖ed1!**

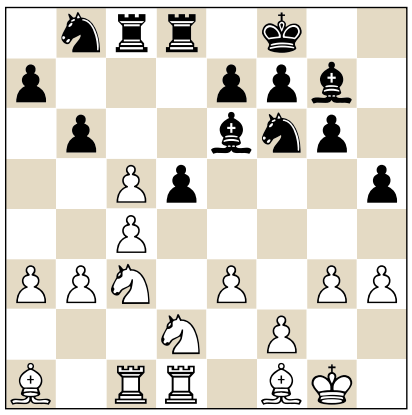
The ideal square for the rook.



**21...♔f8** This doesn't impress, but it isn't easy to suggest a great move here.

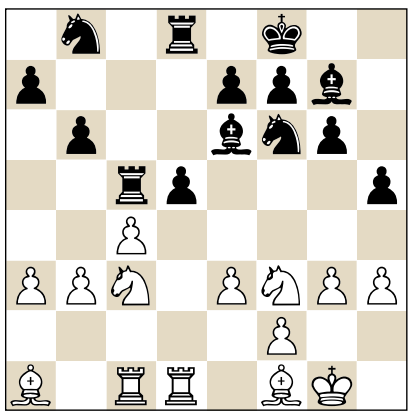
**22.♗f1!** Preparing b4, when Black can forget about ...c5. So here my opponent loses patience.

**22...c5?! 23.dxc5**

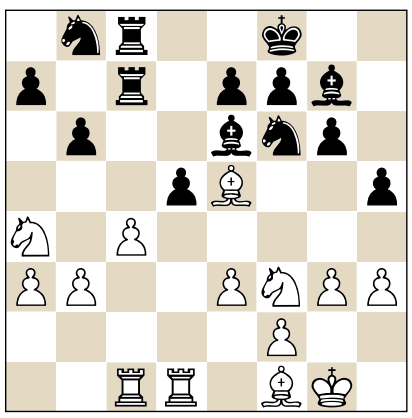


**23...♖xc5?** Trying to avoid any structural weaknesses, but after my next move it appears that Black is not able to get rid of the tension in the centre. 23...bxc5 leads to a standard, slightly worse position: after 24.cxd5 ♘xd5 25.♘ce4 ♗xa1 26.♖xa1 the c5-pawn is weak.

**24.♘f3!** My opponent had judged correctly that the tempting 24.♘de4 wasn't dangerous, but this move sets some unsolvable problems.



**24...♖dc8 25.♘a4** 25.b4 allows 25...♖xc4, complicating the game somewhat. **25...♖5c7 26.♗e5**



**26...♖b7**

Rooks aren't the best pieces when it comes to fianchettoing.

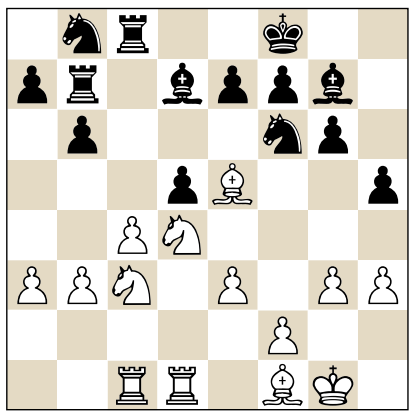
**27.♘d4**

White's position is getting more and more harmonious.

**27...♗d7 28.♘c3!?**

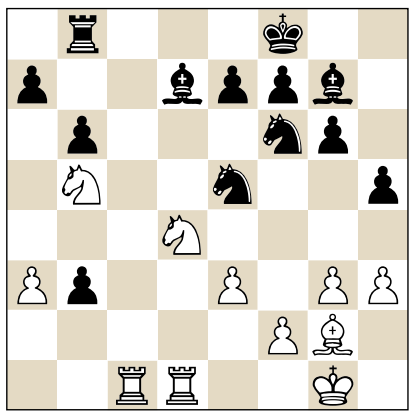
I started enjoying myself too much here and missed an important detail. But fortunately my feeling hadn't betrayed me.

28.♗g2 is stronger, but I didn't want to allow 28...♗xa4, when White will be 'just' a pawn up.



**28...e6?**

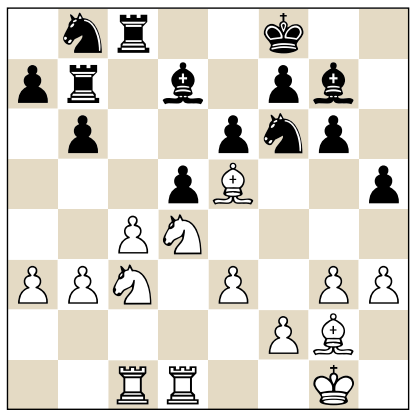
28...dxc4! seems impossible due to back rank problems, but in fact it is the best defence: 29.♗g2 ♘c6 30.♘cb5! (30.♘xc6? wins a piece, but it just doesn't work: 30...♗xc6 31.♗xc6 ♖xc6 32.♖d8+ ♘e8 33.♗xg7+ ♔xg7 34.♖xe8 cxb3) 30...♘xe5 (after 30...a6, 31.♘xc6 ♗xc6 32.♗xc6 ♖xc6 33.♖d8+ ♘e8 34.♗xg7+ ♔xg7 35.♘d4 wins) 31.♗xb7 ♖b8 32.♗g2 cxb3,



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

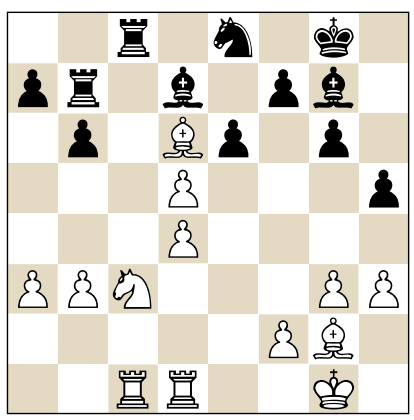
and here White can choose whether to play it safe and capture the b3-pawn, or to leave it for later and play 33.♖b1 or even 33.♘xa7!?. In both cases White has an overwhelming advantage.

**29.♗g2!**



This is a picturesque position. Black is totally lost and all of White's pieces are absolutely ideally placed.

**29...♘c6 30.♗d6+ ♔g8 31.cxd5 ♘xd4 32.exd4 ♘e8**



**33.dxe6** Time to cash in.

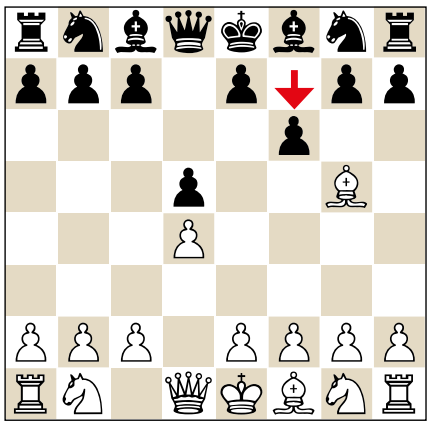
**33...♘xd6 34.♗xb7**

Black resigned.

This concluded the tournament for me, and in the final round I got a well-deserved rest day. Nevertheless, our team also won the final match and finished the 2015 Top 12 with a perfect 11 out of 11. This would have been a good occasion for me to get drunk for the first time in my life, but as happened on all the previous occasions, I let the opportunity pass by. However, there was no escaping from the French music that was promoted by my French teammates on a daily basis. OK, agree, it's not that bad, but guys, seriously, EVERY day and SO loud? ■

# 2...f6 rears its ugly head again

Jeroen Bosch



2...f6!?

'In the most recent Olympiad, gold medallist Yu Yangyi gave it a thumbs-up, which is more than enough reason to re-discover the beauty in this ugly duckling.'

**1.d4 d5 2.♗g5** Some call this line the Levitsky Attack and others the Pseudo-Trompowsky. White is playing in the style of the Trompowsky, although compared to 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 the bishop seems to be shooting into thin air.

I have previously written on the ugly move **2...f6** (*SOS*-7, New In Chess 2007), but I am certainly not the only author to endorse it. Indeed, Richard Pert considers it Black's strongest option versus 2.♗g5 in his repertoire book (for White!) *Playing the Trompowsky* (Gambit, 2013). Not only does 2...f6 score very well for Black in the databases, it also leads to exciting play! There have been some developments in this line, and in the most recent Olympiad, gold medallist Yu Yangyi gave it a thumbs-up, which is more than enough reason to re-discover the beauty in this ugly duckling.

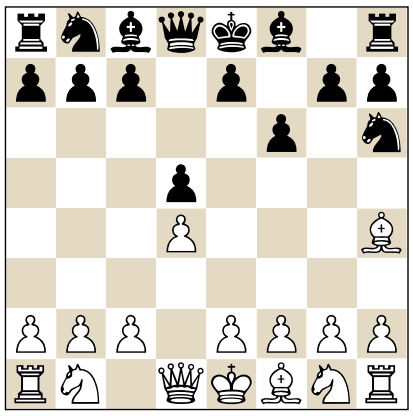
The most logical moves now are **3.♗h4** (Variation A) and **3.♗f4** (Variation B). Oddly enough, White has occasionally withdrawn his bishop to d2, and even to c1! After 3.♗c1 almost any move will do.

The move 3.♗d2 also cannot be right: the bishop obstructs White's game. 3...e5 (3...♘c6 and 4...e5 is fine) 4.dxe5 (or the immediate 4.e4!, although even 4...exd4 5.♕h5+ g6 6.♕xd5 ♕xd5 7.exd5 is completely equal, while 4...dxe4 5.dxe5 ♘c6!? and 4...♘c6!? are interesting) 4...fxe5 5.e4!, Sulava-Delorme, Cannes 2014, is White's point and is still pretty unclear. However, 4...♘c6! is stronger, since 5.exf6 ♘xf6 is an excellent Blackmar-Diemer Gambit reversed – Black was gifted with a useful extra tempo and the bishop is in White's way on d2.

## Variation A

**3.♗h4 ♘h6**

3...c5, as Anand played in a blitz game, is fine too, but we will concentrate on the knight move that is, in fact, the point of 2...f6. Black's entire strategy is based on chasing the bishop that was so light-heartedly developed on move 2!



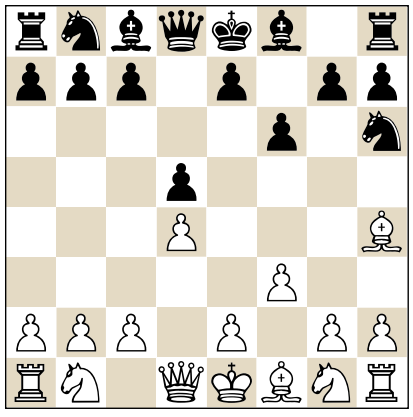
### 4.e3

The most popular reply.

– 4.♘f3 ♘f5 5.♗g3 h5 – it is move 5 and Black is already better! Mukic-Ribli, Kastav 2002.

– 4.♘c3 ♘f5 5.♗g3 h5 6.♕d3 h4 7.♗f4, Finegold-Sarkar, Cherry Hill 2007, and now 7...♘c6! would have been unpleasant for White.

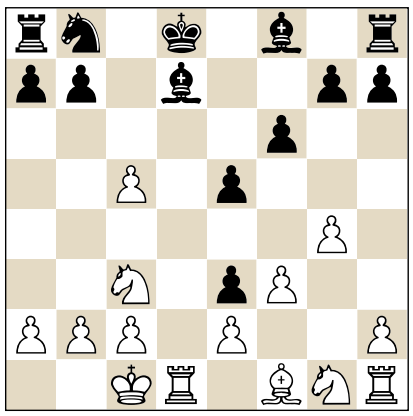
The main alternative, in fact, is **4.f3**, to reserve the f2-square for the bishop. It makes less sense to play 4...♘f5 now that White has 5.♗f2, although even here Black shouldn't be worse. If the move 2...f6 is ugly, then so is 4.f3 !



However, Black has two very good replies in 4...♘c6 and 4...c5, and choosing between them is just a matter of taste:

■ 4...♘c6, and now 5.e4 (5.c3 e5; 5.e3 e5; 5.♘c3 ♘f5 6.♗f2 e5 7.dxe5 d4!∓) 5...dxe4 6.d5 ♘f5! 7.fxe4 ♘xh4 8.♕h5+ ♘g6 9.dxc6 bxc6 10.♘f3 e5 11.♗c4 ♕d7 12.0-0 ♗c5+ 13.♔h1 ♕g4! 14.♗f7+!? ♔e7!∓, Acers-Sveshnikov, Kamena Vourla 2012.

■ 4...c5, and here, too, Black is doing well. The main line runs 5.dxc5 ♘f5!? (this forces a sharp endgame that seems to favour Black; 5...e5 6.♗f2 is perfectly fine for Black too) 6.♗f2 d4 7.g4! ♘e3 8.♗xe3 dxe3 9.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 10.♘c3 e5 11.0-0-0+ ♗d7!

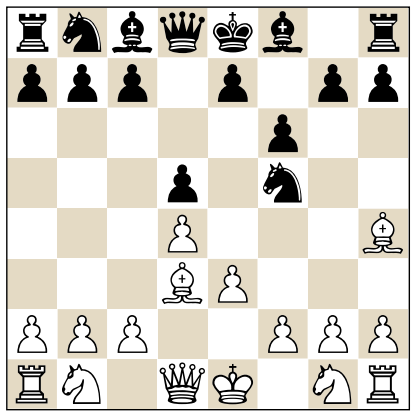


and although your engine will initially prefer White, its assessment will decrease as it 'realizes' that the two bishops and White's development problems count for something, too. In practice, Black won all three games from this position. Let us return to 4.e3.

**4...♘f5** Consistent and strong. White now faces a choice between either moving the bishop once more, variation A2 – **5.♗g3**, or defending it tactically with variation A1 – **5.♗d3**.

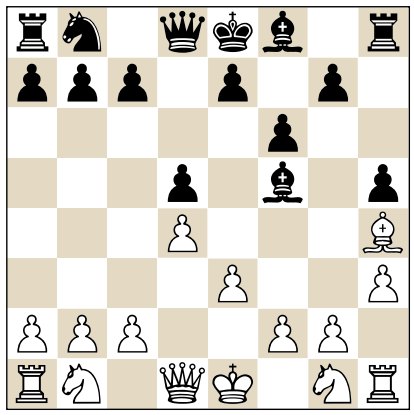
## Variation A1

**5.♗d3**



**5...♘xh4**

Taking the queen's bishop is the simplest reply. When playing this position the second time around, I preferred 5...h5!, which forces White to give up his king's bishop for the knight. After 6.♗xf5 (6.♗g3 h4 7.♕g4 ♘d6 wins for Black; see A2 via transposition) 6...♗xf5 7.h3

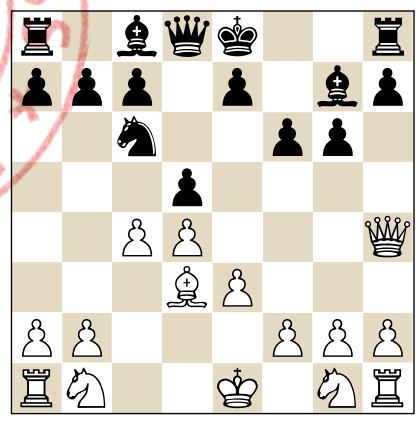


7...e6 8.♗g3 h4 9.♗h2 c5 10.♗xb8!? ♖xb8 11.♘f3 ♔f7, with two bishops and more space Black is holding all the trumps; Rogers-Bosch, Hoogeveen 1997.

**6.♕h5+ g6 7.♕xh4 ♗g7 8.c4**

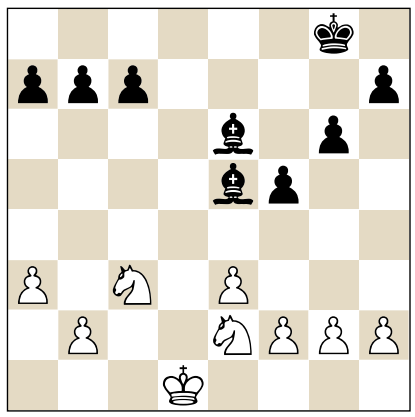
In Miladinovic-Sedlak, Cetinje 2012, the players agreed a draw after 8.♘e2 ♘c6 9.a3 e5 10.c4, but Black is slightly better in the final position.

**8...♘c6!**



**9.cxd5** The stem game saw 9.a3 e5! 10.♘c3 exd4 11.♘xd5 ♘e5 (11...dxe3) 12.♗f1? dxe3 13.0-0-0 exf2 14.♕xf2 0-0, and Black was winning in A.Smith-Bosch, Manchester 1997.

**9...♘b4** Also pretty good is 9...♕xd5 10.♘f3 ♘b4 11.♗e4 ♕a5. **10.♗e4 f5 11.a3 ♘xd5 12.♗f3** If 12.♗xd5 ♕xd5 13.♘f3 then 13...♕b5! is awkward to meet. **12...0-0 13.♘e2 e5** Black can also keep the queens on for a bit longer with 13...♘b6 14.♘bc3 c6. **14.♕xd8 ♖xd8 15.♗xd5+ ♖xd5 16.♘bc3 ♖d8 17.0-0-0 ♗e6 18.dxe5 ♗xe5 19.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 20.♖d1 ♖xd1+ 21.♔xd1**

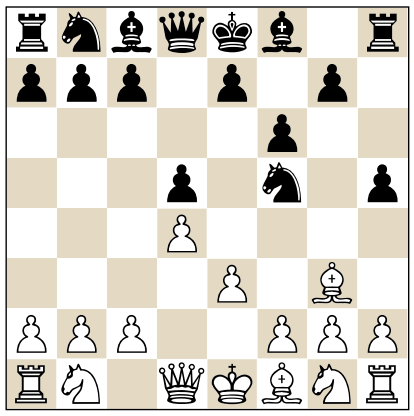


With two bishops versus two knights Black has the vastly superior chances in the ending. Yu won on move 77 (Mehmeti-Yu Yangyi, Tromsø 2014).

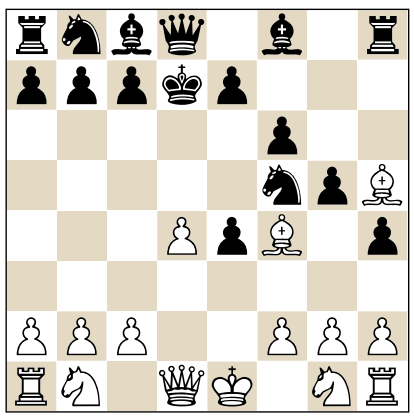
## Variation A2

**5.♗g3** White makes another move with the queen's bishop, and now Black's most natural option is to pursue the bishop with 5...h5. However, if you don't like the (drawing) consequences of 10.d5 below, then 5...c5, which has also done well in practice, is an excellent alternative.

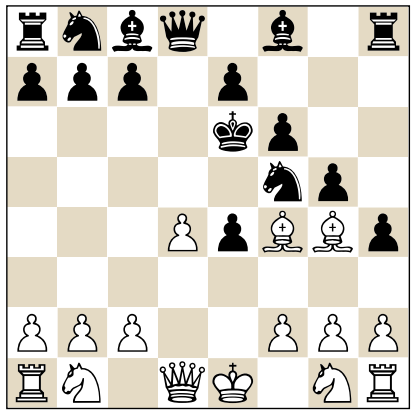
**5...h5**



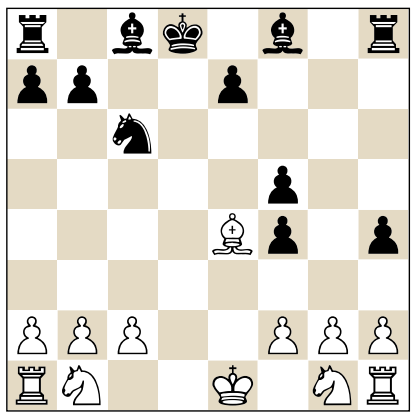
Now things begin to heat up after
**6.♗e2!?**
Black is fine after 6.h3 ♘xg3 7.fxg3. And if 6.♗d3 h4 7.♕g4 then Black has 7...♘d6!, when White loses a piece following 8.♕g6+ ♘f7 9.♗f4 e5 10. dxe5 fxe5 11.♗xe5 ♖h6, as pointed out by Ian Rogers in the post-mortem of our 1997 game.
**6...h4 7.♗h5+** Instead, 7.♗f4 g5 8.♗h5+ ♔d7 just transposes.
**7...♔d7 8.♗f4 g5**
The whole board is on fire. White's dark-squared bishop is trapped, but what about that king on d7?
**9.e4**
Securing a retreat for the bishop at the cost of a pawn. 9.♗g4 e6 10.e4 dxe4 11.♗c1, and Black is slightly preferable after both 11...c6 and 11...♔e8.
**9...dxe4**



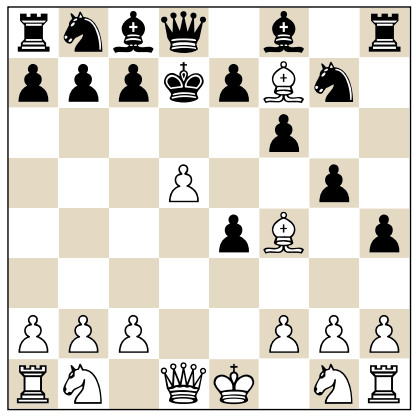
**10.d5**
This is likely to end in a draw, but it is also White's best move!
– 10.♗c1 c6 11.♘c3 (11.♗g4 ♔c7 12.♘e2 ♘d6 13.♗xc8 ♕xc8 14.♘bc3 h3 was excellent for Black in the blitz game Adams-Van Wely, Wijk aan Zee 1998) 11...♔c7 12.d5 e6 (12...e5!∓ is even stronger) 13.dxc6 ♕xd1+ (13...♘xc6) 14.♗xd1 ♗b4 (14...♘xc6 15.♘xe4 ♗e7 is quite nice too), and Black retained an edge in Mikhalevski-Milov, Dieren 1997. It was this game that first drew my attention to the strength of 2...f6!.
– 10.♗g4 e6 11.♗d2 c6 12.♘c3 ♘d6 13.♘h3 ♔c7 14.0-0 ♗e7 15.♗e2 is a none-too-convincing-looking suggestion for White from Pert. At this particular point, 15...♘d7, followed by ...♔b8 or ...♘b6, seems quite good for Black, while Pert does not mention 10...♔e6! but the engines do!



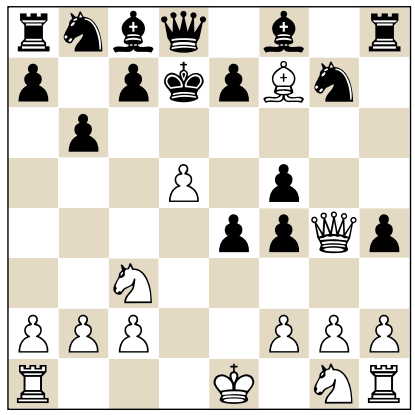
Black will play ...♔f7 next (unless White takes on f5) and is doing well.
**10...♘g7**
Black also has 10...gxf4!? 11.♗g4 c6 as a possible winning attempt (note that 11...♔e8 12.♗h5+ is a repetition; and that 11...e6!? 12.dxe6+ ♔xe6 13.♕xd8 ♗b4+ 14.♕d2 ♗xd2+ 15.♘xd2 ♖g8 is about equal) 12.dxc6+ ♔c7 13.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 14.♗xf5 (14.cxb7 ♗xb7 15.♗xf5 e3∓) 14...♘xc6 15.♗xe4 f5



and Black's bishop pair ensures him a promising endgame.
**11.♗f7!**
This sacrifice is the reason why White can afford to play 10.d5.

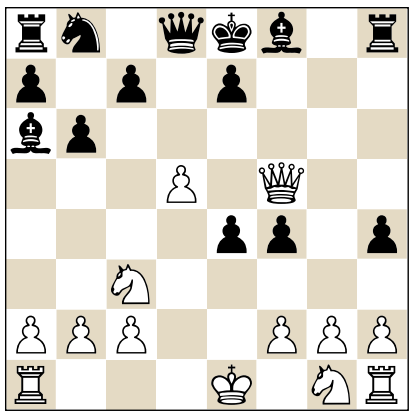


**11...gxf4 12.♘c3! b6!**
Black cannot avoid a draw by repetition at this stage, as the alternatives are worse.
Not 12...♖h6? 13.♘ge2 f5 14.♘xf4 ♖f6 15.♘e6 ♖xf7 16.♘xd8 ♔xd8, and Black is fine materially with three pieces for the queen, but his coordination is poor. Also very risky is 12... f5 13.♘h3 b6 14.♘g5!. If you want to play for a win, you're better off playing 10…gxf4 or avoiding the complications after 5…h5 altogether with 5…c5.
**13.♕g4+ f5**

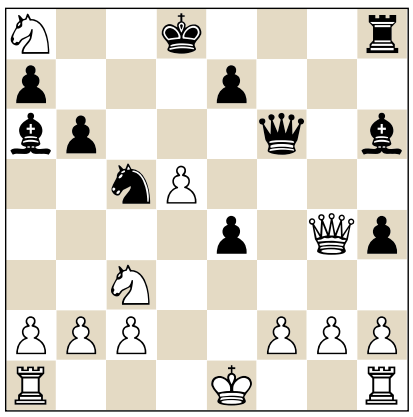


and White has a repetition with **14.♗e6+ ♘xe6 15.♕xf5 ♗b7 16.♕xe6+ ♔e8 17.♕g6+** (½-½ Duckworth-Finegold, ICC 2014).
Alternatively, White can try:
**14.♕g6** to see if Black will play
**14...♗a6!**
14...♗b7? is a mistake because the black king needs that square; 15.♗e6+ ♘xe6 16.dxe6+! ♔c8 17.♖d1 wins for White.
**15.♗e6+ ♘xe6 16.♕xe6+**
16.dxe6+? is now met by 16...♔c6 17.♖d1 ♕c8 18.♕xf5 ♔b7!, and Black has escaped and is winning.
**16...♔e8 17.♕g6+ ♔d7**

**18.♕xf5+ ♔e8**



Here, finally, White is best advised to call it a day with 19.♕g6+. Instead Pert suggests playing on with **19.♘h3 ♕d6 20.♘xf4** when he gives 20...♗g7 21.♘e6, with excellent compensation for the piece. There is a major flaw, however, for Black has a stronger move in **20...♕f6! 21.♕g4** 21.♕xe4 ♘d7 22.♘e6 ♔f7 also favours Black. **21...♘d7 22.♘e6 ♘c5! 23.♘xc7+ ♔d8 24.♘xa8** Stronger is 24.♘xa6 ♘xa6 25.♘xe4 ♕xb2 26.0-0, which is very unclear. **24...♗h6!!**



and with White's king completely stuck in the centre due to Black's raking bishops, Black is actually just winning! Take a quiet look at the board and try out a few moves for White to see that this is true! Hint: 25...♖f8 is a major threat.

## Variation B

**3.♗f4 ♘c6**

For reasons of space I will analyse only this move, but allow me to point out that 3...c5 is a popular alternative among grandmasters, when such lines as 4.e3 (4.♗xb8 ♖xb8 5.♘c3 e6; 4.c3 ♘c6 5.♘f3 ♕b6) and 4...♘c6 5.♘f3 g5 6.♗g3 h5 7.h3 ♘h6 inspire full confidence in the black position. Do try this at home (and in the tournament hall!) if playing for a broad centre is your thing.

**4.♘f3**

After the meek 4.e3 Black grabs the initiative with 4...e5 5.♗g3 exd4 (5...♗d6 is also good) 6.exd4 ♕e7+! 7.♘e2 ♗f5, and Black is a bit better already.

**4...g5**

Once you have said A (2...f6) it makes sense to also shout B (4...g5!).

In *SOS*-7, I mooted the option of going for a reversed Blackmar-Diemer Gambit with 4...e5 5.dxe5 fxe5 6.♘xe5 ♕f6. The position after 7.♘d3 ♗f5 is good fun, and is well-known with reversed colours (Black has gained a tempo with 2...f6 and is now 'White' in a Blackmar-Diemer). Not objectively the best option perhaps, this 4...e5, but it may be worth your while to confuse your opponent! 4...♗g4 5.♘bd2 ♘xd4!? 6.♘xd4 e5 7.h3 ♗h5! was my main line in SOS-7. This still seems fine, but 4...g5 is quite strong and perhaps even more in keeping with 2...f6.

**5.♗g3**

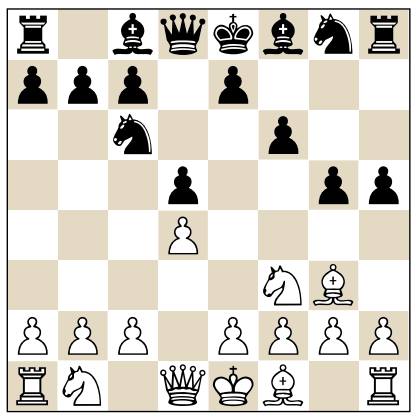
5.♗c1 g4! sees Black grabbing the initiative, as 6...e5 is coming up.

**5...h5**

Black is consistent in harassing the bishop but there is also 5...g4!? to consider. For example:

– 6.♘h4 e5 7.e3 (7.dxe5 fxe5 8.e4!?), and now the very concrete 7...f5!, Hameau-Renard, France 2009, and 8...f4 is a threat, while 8.dxe5 is met by 8...♗e7.

– Or 6.♘g1 e5 7.e3 and now Grover's suggestion of 7...h5!? 8.h3 ♘h6 is also strong.



**6.h3**

Black is doing well after 6.h4 g4 7.♘g1 ♘h6 (7...e5!?) 8.e3 ♘f5.

**6...♘h6 7.e3 ♘f5**

Black gains another tempo at the cost of the queen's bishop. In view of his space advantage, Black has very comfortable play.

**8.♗h2 e5!**

This is the correct approach. Worse are 8...♗g7?! 9.c4! and 8...g4? in view of the trick 9.hxg4 hxg4 10.♗xc7!.

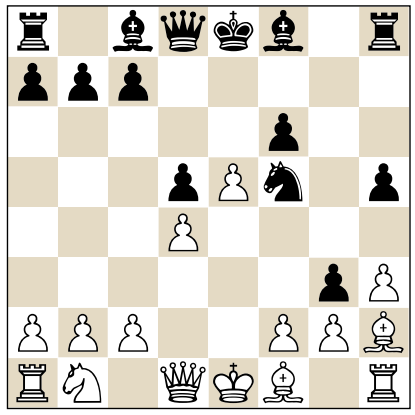
**9.dxe5 g4!**

The point of the previous move.

**10.♘d4**

10.♘fd2 g3! 11.♗xg3 ♘xg3 12.fxg3 fxe5, and for only one pawn Black has all the positional assets he can dream of. White can sacrifice a piece with 10.♘c3 gxf3 11.♕xd5 fxe5 12.♕xf3, but Black seems very comfortable after 12...♕g5.

**10...♘cxd4 11.exd4 g3!**



**12.♗g1**

Black's chances are preferable after 12.fxg3 fxe5 13.dxe5 ♕g5, and the same goes for 12.♗xg3 ♘xg3 13.fxg3 fxe5 14.dxe5 ♕g5: here Richard Pert (and the engines) indicate 15.♗b5+ c6 16.0-0, but if Black does not start grabbing pawns too soon, he will have the upper hand, e.g. 16...♗c5+ 17.♔h1 ♗d7 18.♗d3 0-0-0. Black will easily regain one of his sacrificed pawns and retain his strategic plusses.

**12...fxe5**

And with very energetic play Black has proved White very wrong – just look at that bishop on g1! Garcia Marin-Nunez Lucero, Barcelona 2013. ■

NEW IN CHESS TRAINING

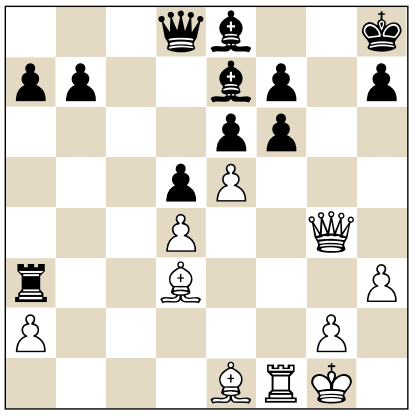
Sadler on Books

# Chess Non-Stop

Books about defence, attack and the right moment to exchange (on your terms!). **Matthew Sadler** tells you how good they are.

I've had the feeling that I've been reading and watching chess non-stop the past month. It all started when I got *Practical Chess Defence* by Jacob Aagaard (Quality Chess) through the post with the following inscription: 'To Matthew, Good luck working on your defence!' Wow, I knew publishing turnaround times had decreased but I only complained about the lack of books on defence last month! A careful study revealed however that the book had already been published in 2006! So it's an additional book about defence that I wasn't aware of.

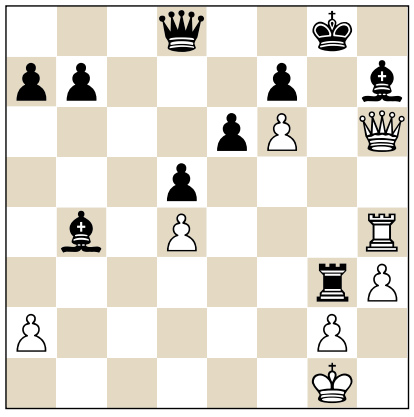
It's not the complete manual of defence I was looking for, but I think it's an excellent trainer of last-ditch defence! The book follows the standard Aagaard format of a couple of chapters of thematic introduction followed by 200 puzzles of increasingly mind-bending difficulty arranged in 4 levels from 'Warming Up!' to 'Level 3'. One nice aspect of the solutions is that next to the moves, Aagaard also gives an indication of how the exercise could best have been approached. I'll have to come clean and admit that I already found the exercises in Level 1 quite tricky. As I said, this book is really focused on desperate defence and I clearly found it quite a challenge to get past my initial negative evaluation of positions and believe in the presence of defensive resources. It made me have a good think about why that was. Part of it is definitely related to energy. You need substantial reserves of mental energy in order to step past what your experience is telling you and summon additional ingenuity to find irrational resources in positions. Without that, you can stare at a position for ages and still not get past your standard reactions. And sitting in the train with the book after a hard day's work, that happened to me a little too often for my liking! A little spoiler alert now: a few solutions to the exercises coming up!



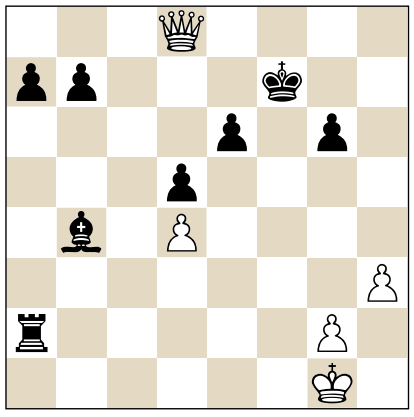
**Magarashvili-Ikitishvili**
USSR 1980

An example quite typical of the book's content. Many of the puzzles revolve around the incorrect execution of a winning attack. With the opponent at his mercy, White raises his sword... and stabs himself in the behind!
**1.♗xh7 ♔xh7 2.♕h4+ ♔g8 3.♗b4**

As Aagaard points out, the simple 3.exf6 would have been decisive. At this point... Black resigned! As Aagaard says, 'Why do people want to resign so badly that they do so when all the pieces are hanging? Black could at least play a few more moves to see what his opponent was up to! Who knows he might have found something he did not see immediately.'
**3...♗xb4 4.exf6 ♗a4 5.♖f4 ♗c2 6.♖g4+**
6.♕h6 fails to a gorgeous point: 6...♖g3 7.♖h4 ♗h7.

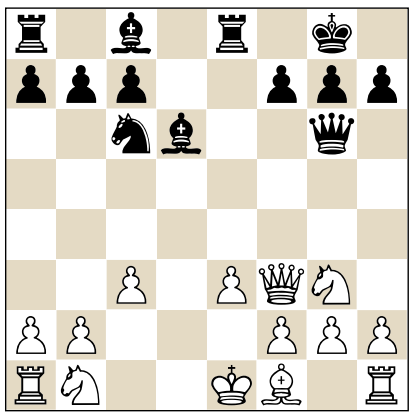


Wonderful! After 8.♕xh7+ ♔f8 9.♕h8+ ♖g8 – Black builds a safe little house for his king!
**6...♗g6 7.♖xg6+ fxg6 8.f7+ ♔xf7 9.♕xd8 ♖xa2**



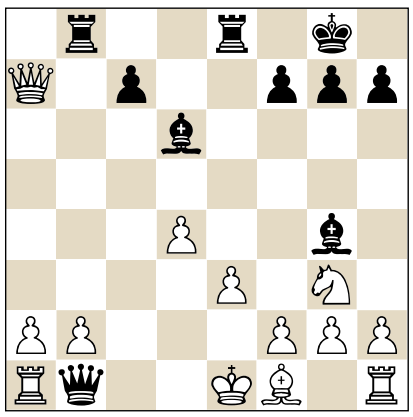
This is pretty equal: the weakness of the d4-pawn gives Black sufficient

counterplay if White tries to grab the b7-pawn, while White pretty much always has a perpetual in hand. This final position is also typical of the exercises in the book. Many of the solutions aren't 'clean' but involve some judgement to decide whether the defender really has escaped or not! That adds to the difficulty but of course it's just how things go in a real game!



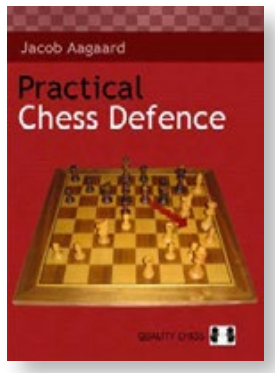
**Srinivas-Ravikumar**
India 1984

As Aagaard points out, 1...♕c2 would have been an easy way to a large advantage. Black however glimpsed an open door to immortality...
**1...♘d4 2.cxd4 ♗g4** I think you can guess how the game ended!
**3.♗d3**
The good old desperado! Aagaard gives the line 3...♕xd3 4.♕xg4 ♗b4+ 5.♘c3 ♗xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♕xc3+ 7.♔e2 ♕c4+ 8.♔d2 ♕b4+ 9.♔d1 and the checks run out. When I saw this solution, I was a bit peeved! I'd spent ages in the train wondering about another attempt for White: 3.♕xb7 ♖ab8 4.♕xa7 when 4...♕xb1+



was the brilliant conclusion of course.
**3...♕g5** Much nastier!

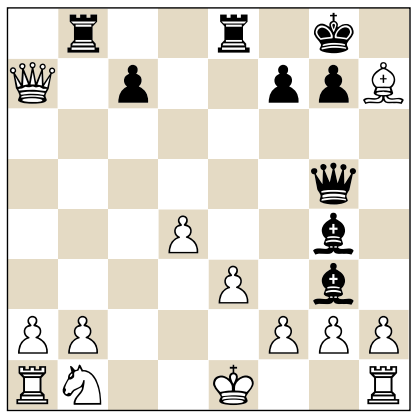
**Practical Chess Defence**
by Jacob Aagaard
Quality Chess
2006
★★★☆☆



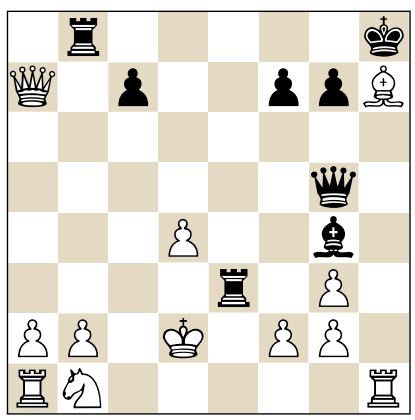

**4.♕xb7 ♖ab8**
Calculating this in my head, my evaluation of the position took a few 360 degrees turns before I concluded a draw was the correct result. Stockfish seems to agree with me (grudgingly!).
**5.♕xa7**
The line I'd focused on mainly: it seemed more logical to keep hanging on to the rook on b8 if Black is going

'A sneaky little intermezzo that you don't miss anymore in the computer age!'

to sacrifice on e3. However, Stockfish's main line was 5.♕c6 ♖xe3+ 6.fxe3 ♕xe3+ 7.♘e2 (the queen on c6 is just a bit better laced defensively, in particular giving cover to the knight on c3) 7...♖xb2 8.♘c3 ♕d2+ 9.♔f1 ♕xd3 10.♕e8+ ♗f8. Black is again looking to follow up with ...♖b6-e6/f6, once again with enough for the rook, according to Stockfish.
**5...♖xe3+**
5...♗xg3 took a lot of my attention too:
A) 6.hxg3 ♖xe3+ 7.fxe3 ♕xe3+ wins;
B) 6.0-0 ♗xh2+ 7.♔xh2 ♗f3 8.gxf3 ♖b6 9.♕xb6 ♕h5+ (9...cxb6 10.♖g1 allows White's king to escape when he has too much material for the queen) 10.♔g2 ♕g5+ is a draw by perpetual;
C) 6.♗xh7+ – a sneaky little intermezzo that you don't miss anymore in the computer age! It's quite fraught though!:



C1) 6...♔xh7 7.hxg3+ ♔g8 8.0-0;
C2) 6...♔h8 7.hxg3 ♖xe3+ 8.♔d2



Yes it does work! c3 is the magic square for the White king (8.♔f1 ♖e1+ 9.♔xe1 ♕c1 mate; 8.fxe3 ♕xe3+ 9.♔f1 ♗e2+ 10.♔e1 ♗d3+ mates) 8...♖f3+ (8...♖e1+ 9.f4; 8...♖eb3+ 9.f4 ♖xb2+ 10.♗c2+; 8...♖e2+ 9.♔c3 – barely credible, but White is winning, Black has no checks!) 9.♔c2 ♖xf2+ 10.♔c3 followed by ♗d3+ keeps White a piece up, though Black obviously has some swindling chances due to the exposed white king;
C3) 6...♔f8 7.0-0 (possible now, as White has gained the additional defensive possibility of ♕c5+, exchanging queens) 7...♗d6. White has three extra pawns but Black has serious counterplay. I was pretty nervous with White but Stockfish feels he can hold it!
**6.fxe3 ♕xe3+ 7.♘e2 ♖xb2 8.♕a8+ ♗f8 9.♘c3 ♕d2+ 10.♔f1**
10.♔f2 ♕f4+ 11.♔e1 ♕d2+ was my drawing line.

# Sadler on Books

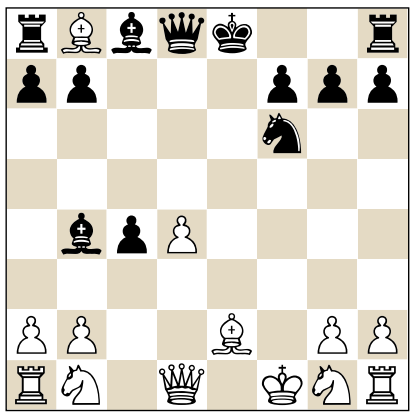
**10...♕xd3 11.♖e1** This felt very risky to me, but Stockfish just sees a draw. **11...♖b6 12.h3 ♕e3 13.♖d1 ♖f6+ 14.♔e1 ♖e6 15.hxg4 ♕xc3+ 16.♖d2 ♕c1+ 17.♖d1 ♕c3+** Among other perpetuals. In any case, it's not the easy win that the notes suggest.

■ ■ ■

'Yeah, yeah' and a sour, dismissive expression on my face was my reaction when *My Best Games of Chess 1905-1954* by Savielly Tartakower landed on my doorstep. I'm a huge fan of the old players but Tartakower was the big exception. It all happened when I saw this game as a child while reading Alekhine's tournament book of the 1927 New York tournament:

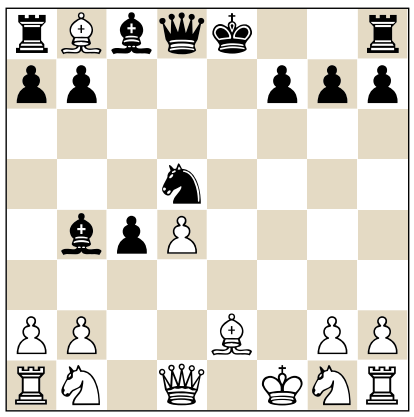
**Savielly Tartakower**
**José Raúl Capablanca**
New York 1924

**1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♗e2 d5 4.exd5 ♘f6 5.c4 c6 6.d4 ♗b4+ 7.♔f1 cxd5 8.♗xf4 dxc4 9.♗xb8**



Expecting 9...♖xb8 10.♕a4+, winning a piece.

**9...♘d5**



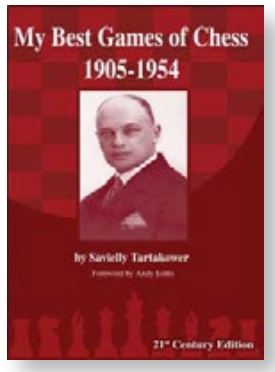
Oops! **10.♔f2 ♖xb8 11.♗xc4 0-0 12.♘f3** And White had a disgusting position.

After that I decided that Tartakower's games couldn't possibly be worth looking at. The fact that he had won and scored high placings in many top international tournaments in the 1920s and 30s, I loftily dismissed as totally undeserved. I had much the same attitude towards Tartakower as the brilliancy committee at the 1922 Teplitz-Schonau tournament that – as Tartakower complains – grudgingly awarded him the 3rd brilliancy prize for his game against Maroczy while complaining that he couldn't have calculated it all anyway, so they shouldn't be encouraging him!

So, reading this book has once again been a joy of discovery for me. First of all, we need to thank Russell Enterprises for reviving this book in a new edition. The layout of the book is excellent with clear diagrams and a pleasant typeface. Tartakower's annotations are a nice mix of anecdotes, witticisms and analysis which makes it ideal to read in the train! A nice extra touch is that all the games and Tartakower's analysis have been blunder-checked with engines, and the result of this analysis has been made available for separate download from the book website. It's a better way of doing things than disfiguring the original text with footnotes and corrections and also makes it a nice training exercise to try and spot the mistakes as you read! In general, I have to say though that I was favourably impressed by Tartakower's annotations: he really makes a serious effort to solve certain concrete positions, which isn't often the case with annotations from this period.

Tartakower played complicated tactical games from unusual openings, which obviously increases the risk of disasters such as the one against Capablanca. Against slightly lesser gods, however, he was capable of producing really powerful attacking play. In particular, the book features a number of fine games against Spielmann.

**Tartakower: My Best Games of Chess 1905-1954**
by Savielly Tartakower
Russell Enterprises
2014
★★★★☆



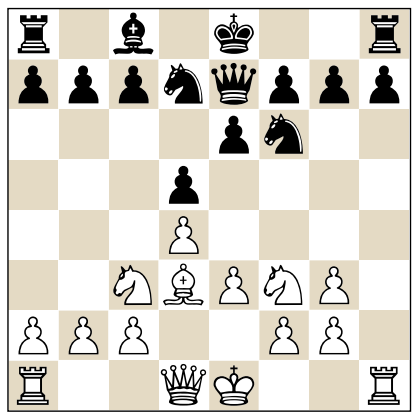

I assumed that he was one of Tartakower's 'clients', but over 60 games Tartakower only built up a slight plus score, winning 17 and losing 14. All of their games are entertaining and well worth playing through, but this was one of my favourites:

**Savielly Tartakower**
**Rudolf Spielmann**
Vienna 1921 (1st match game)

**1.d4 d5 2.♗f4**

'An archaic opening', according to Tartakower. It's one of my fears that once computers have worked out chess completely, the conclusion will be that either Jobava's ♗f4 openings or Mark Hebden's Barry Attack – 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♗f4 – are the best openings for White!

**2...♘f6 3.e3 e6 4.♘f3 ♗d6 5.♗g3 ♘bd7 6.♗d3 ♗xg3 7.hxg3 ♕e7 8.♘c3**

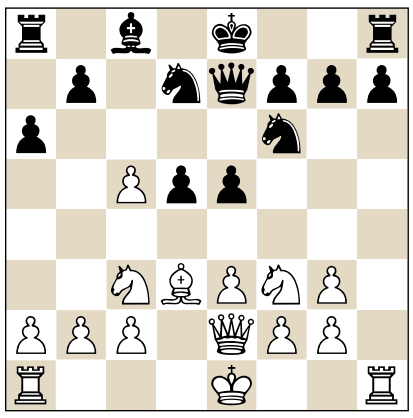


A good non-standard decision, to meet 8...e5 with 9.♘b5 e4 10.♘xc7+ ♔d8 11.♘xa8, which will turn out very nicely for White.

**8...a6 9.♕e2 c5 10.dxc5 e5**

In case of 10...♘xc5 11.0-0-0 ♘xd3+ 12.♖xd3 Tartakower optimistically claims that 'White controls the cen-

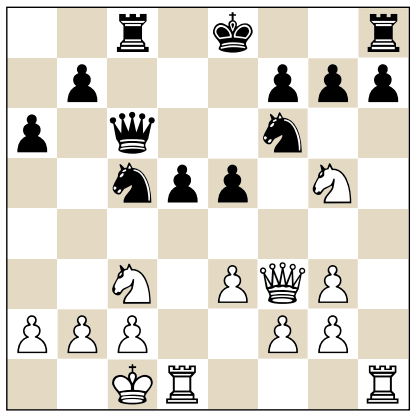
tre'. Not 100% sure about that but the position is not without venom. White will definitely get Jobava-type play with ♘e5 followed by the advance of the f- and g-pawns.



**11.♗f5** Tartakower was very proud of this move. It looks a little strange to me: after all, White is just helping Black by exchanging off the inactive bishop on c8. On the other hand, Tartakower is clearly aiming to get Black's king castling kingside when he can make use of the g4-g5 thrust and the half-open h-file.

11.e4 d4 12.♘d5 ♕xc5 13.0-0-0 was Tartakower's other thought, which he found less clear. This does look quite tempting to me though. Castling looks very risky for Black and otherwise White can start launching himself at Black's position with g4-g5, ♘h4-f5 and c3. I'd rather be White!

**11...♘xc5 12.♗xc8 ♖xc8 13.0-0-0 ♕e6 14.♘g5 ♕c6 15.♕f3**



An energetic way of keeping White's initiative going. It's not an easy position for Black to play, especially as he must be kicking himself that White has created so many threats after just 15 moves of a London system! White has combined all his pieces against d5, f7 and h7 so the next few moves are crucial for Black.

**15...♘e6**

Cunning, but asking too much of Black's position!

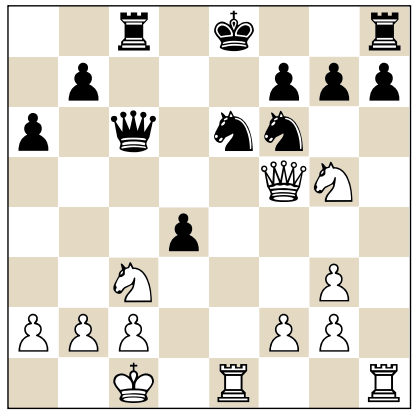
15...♘ce4 16.♕f5 ♘xc3 17.♕xe5+ ♔f8 18.♕xc3 ♕xc3 19.bxc3 h6 20.♔b2 ♔e7 21.♘h3 g5 22.f3 is assessed as better for White by Tartakower, and he may well be right. Looking at it though, I guess that the ...g5 manoeuvre is not quite right: the weakness of the h-pawn makes it problematic for Black to focus his rooks against the white queenside. 21...♖c5 followed by ...♖hc8 can't be bad for Black.

**16.♕f5** I really like the way that White is fighting with all his pieces against Black's structure. Great coordination!

**16...d4**

16...♘xg5 was the lesser evil, according to Tartakower, although 17.♕xg5 0-0 18.♕xe5 ♘e4 19.♖xd5 ♘xc3 20.bxc3 ♕xc3 21.♕xc3 ♖xc3 22.♖hd1 is obviously much better for White.

**17.exd4 exd4 18.♖de1**



Not difficult, but very powerful. White keeps the h-rook pointing at h7 while the other rook targets the Black king that Tartakower has so consistently tried to keep in the centre. As the editors point out, Tartakower makes a little mistake here in his annotations. After 18.♘e2, then 18...♘xg5

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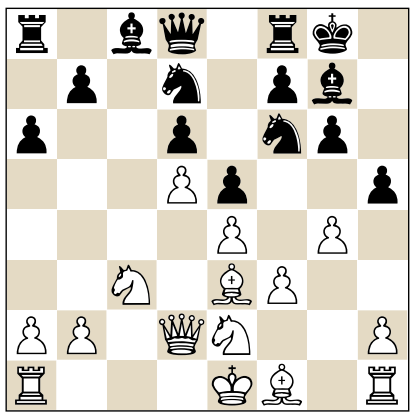
# Sadler on Books

19.♘xd4 ♕c5 doesn't win a piece due to 20.♖he1+ ♔f8 21.♖e5! (easy to miss!). However, after 18...g6 first, Black does indeed win a piece. **18...♔e7 19.♖xe6+ fxe6 20.♖e1** Old-fashioned carnage! **20...♔f8 21.♖xe6 dxc3** 21...♕c4 22.♖xf6+ gxf6 23.♕xf6+ ♔g8 24.♘e6 is Tartakower's pretty winning variation. **22.♖xc6 cxb2+ 23.♔b1 ♖xc6 24.♕e5 b5 25.♕b8+ ♘e8 26.♕b7 ♖f6 27.♕d7 h5 28.f4 ♖hh6 29.f5 ♘d6 30.♘e6+ 1-0**

■ ■ ■

*Winning Chess Manoeuvres* by Sarhan Guliev (New In Chess) is a lovely little book with a very neat premise. The author presents a whole range of positional themes and then tries to trace back through chess history to the source of the idea. He has approached this task very creatively and this leads to some fascinating insights: I learnt so much new from this book!

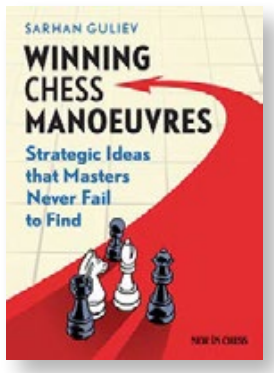
A few examples to show you what I mean.



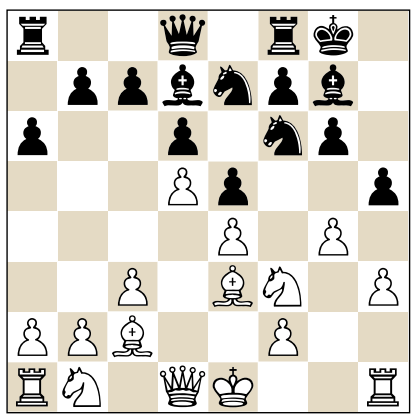
position after 11...h5

Take this well-known line of the Sämisch King's Indian. Who thought up the surprising concept of challenging White's kingside expansion by a

**Winning Chess Manoeuvres**
by Sarhan Guliev
New In Chess 2015
★★★★☆



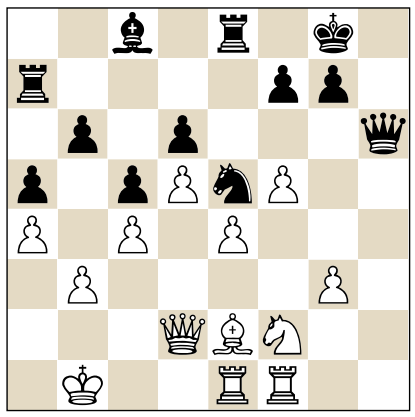

sharp advance of the pawns in front of Black's king? Gligoric of course! Well... he was the first to play it in this specific position. But take a look at this example from 1896!



**Winawer-Charousek**
Budapest 1896
position after 11...h5

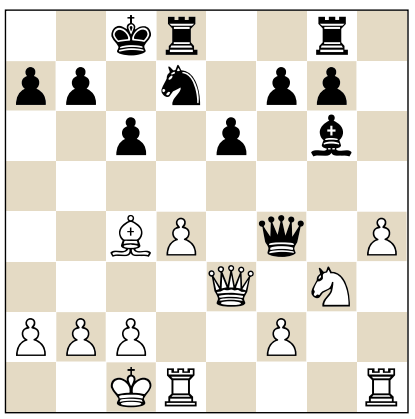
Striking similarity isn't it? Also a good move (11...h5) by the way!

I also loved the section on exchanges of queens on a better square, dealt with in the chapter on non-standard exchanges. Look at these two examples of exchanging queens on your own terms:



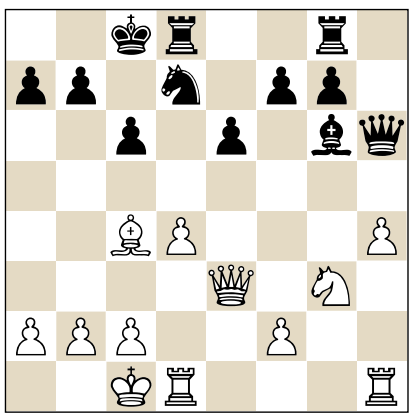
**Kramnik-Tiviakov**
Sochi 1990
position after 29...♕xh6

**30.♕f4** 'You want to exchange? Be my guest – but on my terms!' As Guliev explains, Black's knight on e5 is the pride of his position. After something like 30.♕xh6 gxh6, Black would be fine even if he lost the pawn on h6. 30...♕xf4 31.gxf4 is a completely different story of course. I still remember the first time I ever faced this theme as a youngster. I offered the exchange of rooks on an open file and my opponent played ♖b1-b3. I could either let him double on the b-file or play ...♖xb3 and let him improve his pawn structure. I think I must have stared at the position for 10 minutes wondering what to do!



**Tal-Botvinnik**
Moscow 1960 (match-5)
position after 20...♕e3

An all-time favourite of mine. Tal offers the exchange of queens, with the aim of improving his pawn structure... **20...♕h6**



...which Botvinnik refuses, allowing the exchange of queens but on his terms: the White f- and h-pawns remain isolated. Really nice play! Black also intends ...♘b6-d5, increasing his control of the f4-square and forcing White to take a decision on the exchange of queens. ■

## New In Chess Stars

| | |
|---|---|
| ★★★★★ | Instant classic |
| ★★★★☆ | Excellent |
| ★★★☆☆ | Good |
| ★★☆☆☆ | Mediocre |
| ★☆☆☆☆ | Awful |

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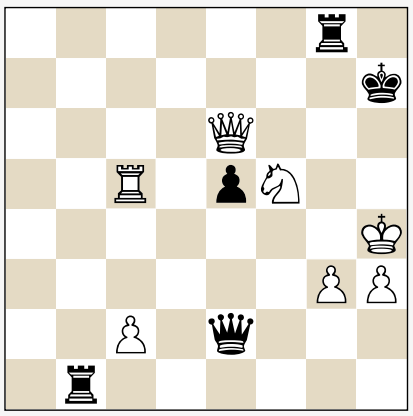
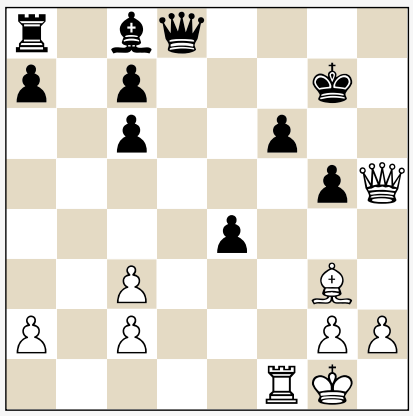
## Find the best move in the positions below

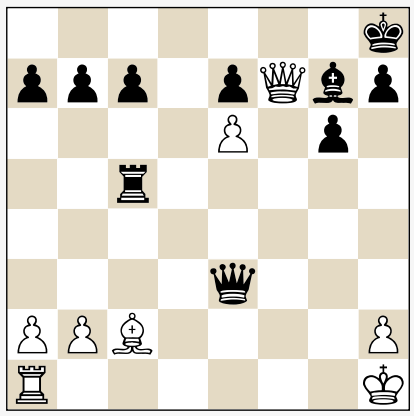
Solutions on page 105



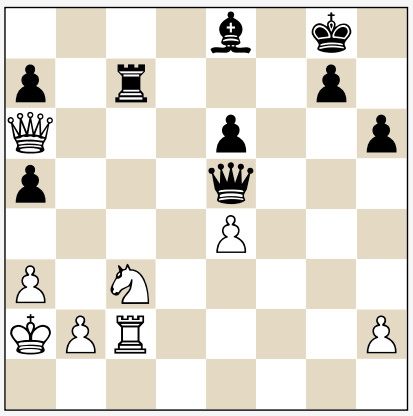
1. Black to play



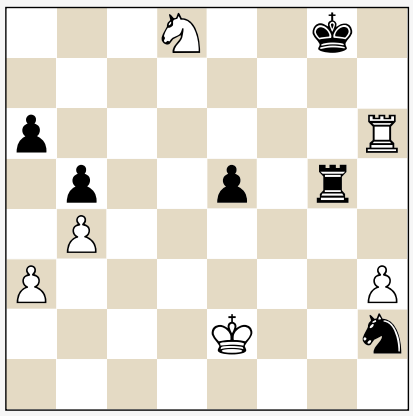
2. White to play



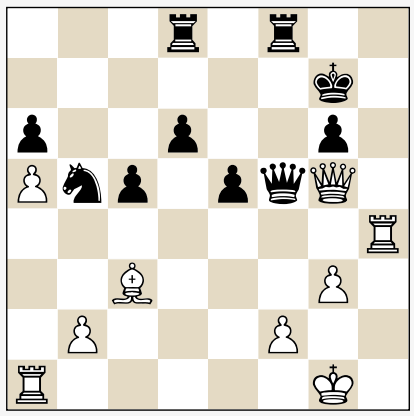
3. Black to play



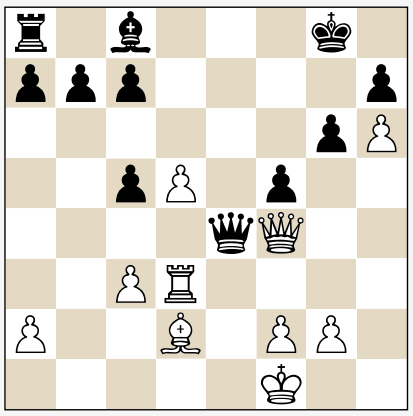
4. Black to play



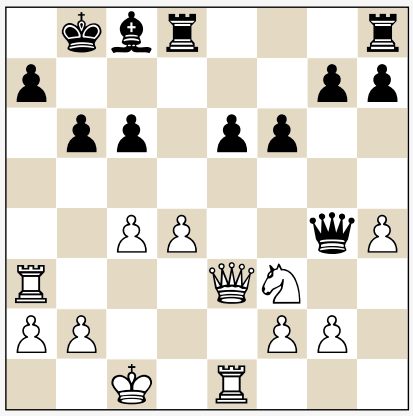
5. White to play



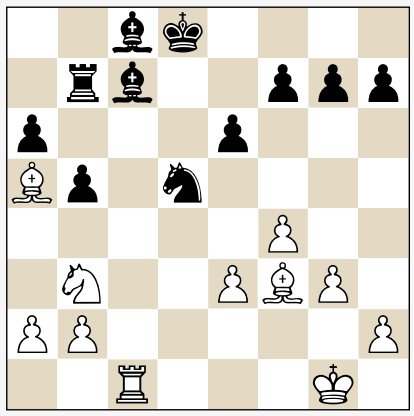
6. White to play



7. White to play



8. White to play



9. White to play

Hans Ree

# A monument for Bent Larsen

Last year, Jan Løfberg, in cooperation with Erik André Andersen, published the first volume of a monumental trilogy (in Danish) that will present as complete a collection of the games and writings of Bent Larsen as is humanly possible. **Hans Ree** has an impossible dream: a fourth volume with Bent's collected conversations.

I procrastinated before I purchased Jan Løfberg's monumental book with the simple and strong title *Larsen, Bind 1 1935-1965* (2014). Was it really something for me? This first volume of what will be a trilogy has 1,110 pages. Løfberg confidently states that from the 1088 serious games that Larsen played in that period, only 30 are missing. Where possible, Larsen's own analyses, from books, tournament bulletins and magazines, have been incorporated.

But would I need so many games? I own *Bent Larsen's Selected Games of Chess*, published by Bell in 1970 and, according to Larsen, pirated in 1991 by Batsford with no fee for him and not even a free author's copy, under the new title *Bent Larsen: Master of Counter-Attack*. I own a book on Larsen by Eric Brøndum, and last year, New In Chess published another fine work of games and analyses by Larsen (*Bent Larsen's Best Games, Fighting Chess with the Great Dane*), which covered Larsen's career till 1977.

A pity that they didn't go a bit further, because – as mentioned by Peter Heine Nielsen in an introductory article – in 1979 Larsen scored a stunning victory at the Clarin tournament in Buenos Aires, where he beat both Spassky and Petrosian and finished three points ahead of his nearest rivals. But a writer or compiler has to stop somewhere, or the publisher might become nervous; unless the writer is Løfberg, who is his own publisher.

Apart from these books, I have read hundreds of articles by Larsen over the years, and what's more, Løfberg's book is in Danish, a language of which until recently I knew only one word: 'Skakbladet'.

But of course I did buy the book, and now I know at least one more Danish word: hyggelig. 'Hyggelige Beverwijk!' was the title of an article by Larsen in *Skakbladet* about the Hoogovens tournament of 1959. Surely 'hyggelig' must mean 'gezellig', a Dutch word that can be translated as 'cosy' or 'chummy', though the Dutch pretend that it is untranslatable, as Dutch cosiness is supposed to be unique in the world. But to me 'hyggelig' seems the perfect equivalent.

You might think that the atmosphere in Beverwijk in 1959 may have been a bit too hyggelig for Larsen, who finished on 8th place with a mediocre score of 4 out of 9, but in *Skakbladet* he wrote that, on the contrary, he had been trying too hard, avoiding draws at his cost.

Apparently, at the early age of 24 Larsen could already read Dutch, as he quoted from a preview by Donner in a Dutch newspaper. I don't have Larsen's formidable linguistic gifts, but I do have Google Translate.

## Photos

Am I wrong? It seems to me that on the first photo in the book, which shows Bent when he was one year old, he is crying. Was he unhappy? Children cry for reasons that adults cannot fathom, even if the child in the photograph is your former self. Anyway, it is a big contrast with later photos in the book, in which he seems the embodiment of youthful joy and energy. And when I look at them, I think of the photos taken of Larsen in his last years, not present in this volume but surely in the next, when Larsen, suffering from diabetes and maybe other disorders, looked 10 years older than he was.

There is a photo from a train-

ing match between Larsen and Jens Enevoldsen in 1953 in which Enevoldsen is smoking a cigar. How times have changed. During my chess career it was common to smoke cigarettes at the board, but cigars, not anymore. That would have been a blast from the past – the age of Emanuel Lasker and Joseph Henry Blackburne. I have never witnessed a player smoking a cigar at the board. Maybe it was still different in 1953. Or maybe it was allowed because it was a friendly match, where anything goes.

A few years later, Enevoldsen would arrange an apartment for Larsen in the centre of Copenhagen, where life was loose and merry at that time. And many years later, Enevoldsen would incur Bent's wrath when he wrote that Larsen was saved from a self-destructive bohemian life by his first wife Lizzie Friis.

That is, if Google Translate served me well for the Danish text. Maybe I shouldn't have used it. It seems more interesting to browse a book in an unknown language without any help, and hit on interesting stories that may exist only in your imagination and would be killed by a translation program.

## Brilliant talker

The last time I met Bent was in 1989, during the tournament of the Grandmasters Association in Palma de Mallorca. It was a qualifier for the elite tournaments of the GMA Grand Prix cycle, but it was also a fine tournament in its own right. Prizes were good and all expenses were paid by the GMA.

One evening Larsen, the American Anatoly Lein and I were sitting in an outdoor café on the seaside boulevard. We talked till late at night, or rather Larsen did the talking and Lein and I listened. There was no subject on which Larsen did not have a considered opinion, always well-informed. He seemed to know everything.

When Lein and I walked back to our hotel, Lein said: 'A great man, Bent. If there were more like him in the chess world, I would try harder to become a good chess player.' I shared his sentiment, and unfortunately I have totally forgotten what we talked about that night.

This may be my chance – for what other chance will I get? – to boast about my score against Bent. By a quirk of fate it is 2½-½ in my favour. OK, his two losses were caused by blunders, the first time in a bad position for him, the second time in a position that he could have drawn. But in our one drawn game, I blundered a piece at move 40. Even without that piece my position was still better, but when Larsen offered a draw a few moves later, I gratefully accepted before I could ruin my position even more.

'We talked till late at night, or rather Larsen did the talking and Lein and I listened.'

That last game we played was in Teesside in 1972. Teesside is an agglomeration of several towns; we were in Thornaby-on-Tees.

A Dutch comedian once wrote a rhyme about his home town Almelo that went: 'The traffic light turns red, the traffic light turns green. In Almelo there is always something to be seen.' That's Teesside 1972, I thought. The upside of it was that there was ample opportunity to talk with Larsen in the hotel bar.

I think it was there that he told me that at one point in his life he had had the ambition to become president of the Danish parliament. Fortunately for the chess world, he didn't pursue it. His ambition may have been realistic. Peter Heine Nielsen wrote that two political parties had offered him safe constituencies to run for the Danish parliament.

I think that Larsen as a politician would have been a liberal conservative (just as his good Dutch friend Hein Donner, who, however, imagined himself to be a socialist), which are good credentials for a politician. But with his habitual outspokenness he would probably have been a baby in the corridors of power and concealed daggers.

In search of lost time I checked a *Tripadvisor* page on the hotel we stayed in during the Teesside tournament. 'Terrible' was the verdict of 44 patrons, but 30 found it excellent. My own recollections of that hotel are lost in the haze of time.

My three games against Bent will undoubtedly appear in Løfberg's second volume, which will cover the years 1965-2010. I hope Bent did annotate one. But to me the third volume seems most exciting, for that one will be a collection of Larsen's articles. I cannot imagine that it will be comprehensive, for he must have written thousands of them, in many languages.

For this column I re-read the articles he wrote for the German magazine *Kaissiber* between 1996 and 2010 – one of my favourite magazines, with great articles by Bent, usually rambling from one subject to another, but always full of insights and interesting information.

In the April-June 2010 issue, editor Stefan Bücker congratulated Larsen with his 75th birthday, regretted the fact that Larsen wasn't present in that issue and promised that he would be back in the next. But due to Bücker falling ill, there never was a next issue of *Kaissiber*, and Larsen would die on September 9th of that year.

I would like to see a fourth volume of Løfberg's monument: Bent's collected conversations. But that may be too much to ask. ■

Jan Timman

# An American Legend

A bundle of nerves and agitation, Walter Browne (1949-2015) left an indelible impression on all his opponents. But he was also a winner. **Jan Timman** remembers a tireless fighter, six-time national champion and for years the undisputed king of the American Open circuit.

On June 24th, Walter Browne died in his sleep in Las Vegas at the age of 66. He had been quite active right up to the end and had just finished the National Open in Las Vegas. It was a jubilee edition, the 50th. In his rich career Browne had won 11 of them. After the last round he had given a simul and a a lecture.

In his book *The Stress of Chess*, which appeared three years ago, he wrote that he went into semi-retirement as early as 1984. That didn't prevent him from playing 47 games that year and boasting a respectable rating of almost 2600 which, at the time, was good enough for a place in the top-20.

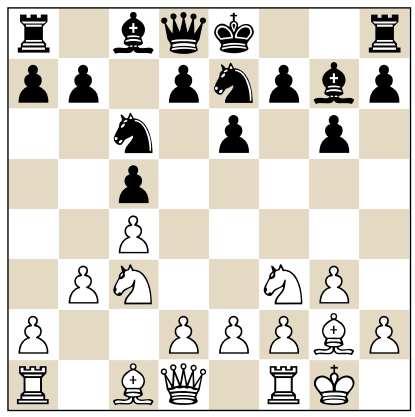
Maybe 1984 was when he started winning more money with poker, the game he had been playing since his early years. Or maybe he had decided in hindsight that he had semi-retired in that year. In the summer of 1984 he failed in his bid for the U.S. championship after he had topped the three previous editions, which must have been discouraging.

I vividly remember seeing Browne for the first time: in early 1968 on the Leidseplein in Amsterdam, where he played blitz games for money in the chess café against all takers. Browne had brought his own clock, which he cherished like a son. I was still attending secondary school in Delft and found it interesting to see how a professional lived. But I did resolve not to follow in his footsteps. Browne wandered the whole of Europe in those days. In January, he had gone to Wijk aan Zee on spec, without an invitation. There was no room for him in the two main tournaments, but he garnered experience by playing blitz games against Kortchnoi and Tal. His breakthrough came a year later, when he received a last-moment invitation to a strongly contested event in San Juan, where he finished shared second. Two months earlier, he had been made an IM, and this was his first grandmaster result. In 1970, Browne was officially made a grandmaster.

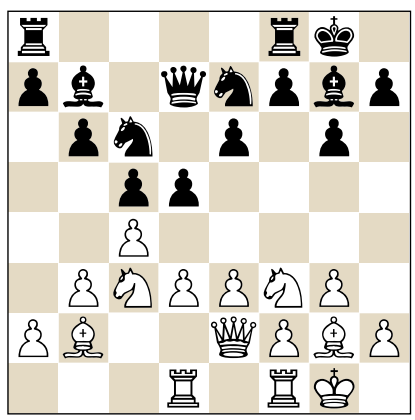
At 21 years of age he was already very strong, as witness the following game, which is not included in *The Stress of Chess*.

EO 28.14 – A37
**Ulf Andersson**
**Walter Browne**
Siegen 1970

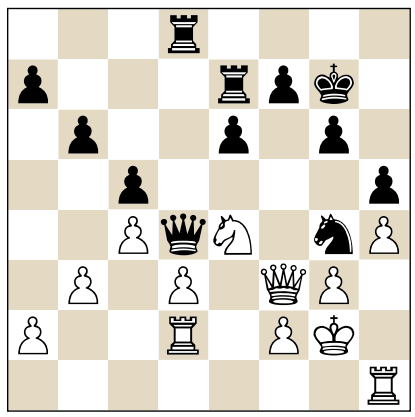
In this Olympiad, Browne still represented his native country of Australia.
**1.♘f3 c5 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.g3 ♘c6 5.♗g2 e6 6.0-0 ♘ge7 7.b3**



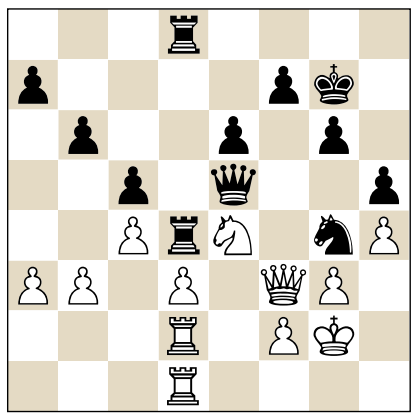
At the start of his career, Andersson was mainly a 1.e4 player, and here he in fact mixes up two different systems. If Black develops his king's bishop to e7 and his knight to f6, the fianchetto of the queen's bishop is justified; now it just makes life easier for Black.
**7...0-0 8.♗b2 d5 9.d3 b6 10.e3 ♗b7 11.♕e2** Slightly better seems to be 11.♕d2 in order to possibly reserve square e2 for the knight.
**11...♕d7 12.♖ad1**



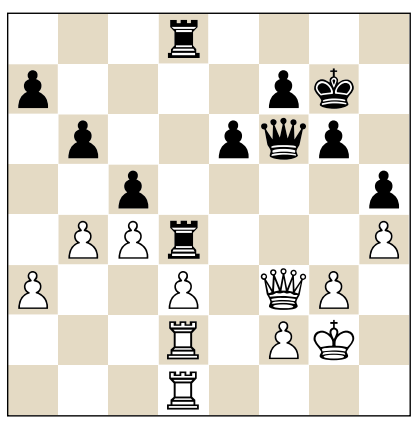
**12...d4!** This advance yields Black a slight but lasting plus.
**13.exd4 ♘xd4 14.♘xd4 ♗xg2 15.♔xg2 ♗xd4 16.♘e4 ♔g7 17.h4 h5 18.♖fe1 ♘f5 19.♘g5 ♖ad8 20.♗xd4+ ♕xd4 21.♕f3 ♖fe8 22.♖e4 ♕c3 23.♖ee1 ♖e7 24.♘e4 ♕d4 25.♖h1 ♘h6 26.♖d2 ♘g4**



Andersson would undoubtedly have loved to play this position as Black. But White is still fairly OK, because he has only one weakness.
**27.♖hd1 ♖ed7 28.♕e2 ♕e5 29.♕f3 ♖d4 30.a3**

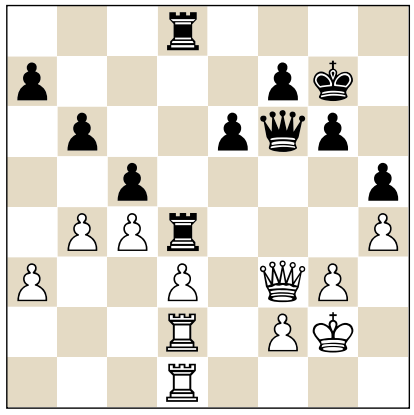


**30...♘f6** Black decides to aim for a double rook ending.
**31.♘xf6 ♕xf6 32.b4**

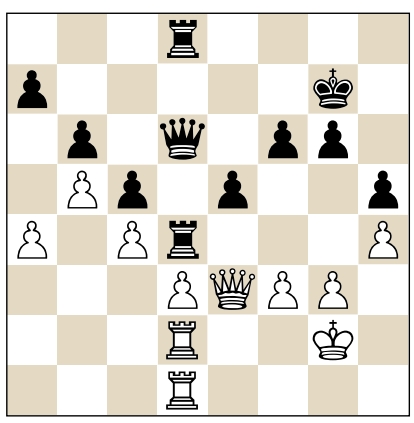


**Just like Frank Sinatra, chess and poker pro Walter Browne felt very much at home in Las Vegas.**

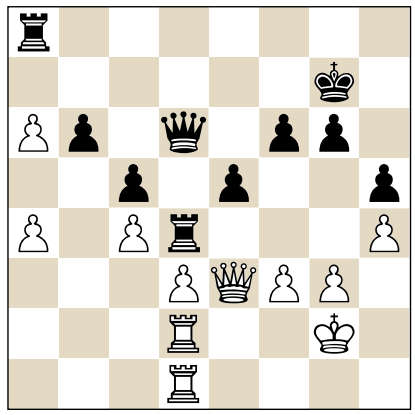
It is understandable that White wants Black to swap queens, since this would gain him some time, but 32.♕xf6+ would have been better, since the text allows Black to avoid the swap.



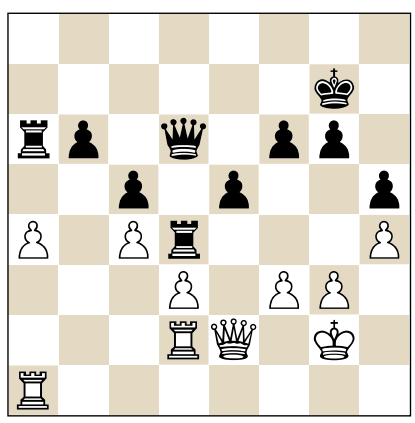
**32...♕e7!** Very strong. White's advance turns out to have weakened his queenside. **33.b5** There's nothing else, because 33.bxc5 would run into 33...♕xc5. But now Black can open a second front. **33...♕d6 34.♕e3 e5 35.f3 f6 36.a4**



**36...a6** With both players in time-trouble, Black starts an action that requires accurate play from his opponent. Objectively better would have been to prepare this action with 36...♖d7, since White now gets unexpected counter-chances. **37.bxa6 ♖a8**

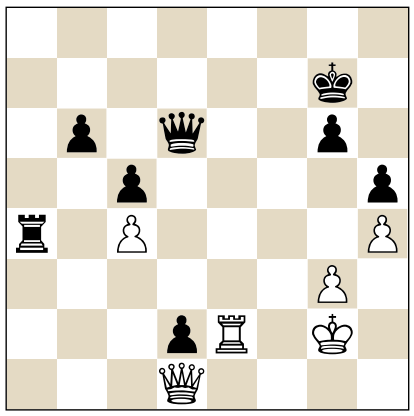


**38.♖a1** Missing his chance. With the pawn sac 38.a5! White could have created counter-chances, e.g. 38...bxa5 39.♖b1 ♕xa6 40.♖db2, with compensation. **38...♖xa6 39.♕e2**

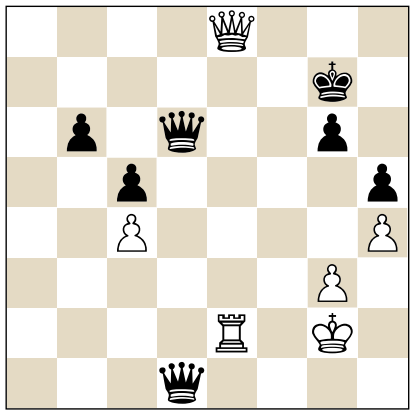


## Jan Timman

**39...f5!** Preparing to continue the advance of the e-pawn. White has two weaknesses, a4 and d3, and these will lead to his downfall.
**40.♖e1 e4 41.fxe4 fxe4 42.♕d1 ♖xd3 43.♖xd3 exd3 44.♖e3 d2 45.♖e2 ♖xa4**



**46.♕xa4** Desperation. After 46.♖xd2 Black has the cross-pin 46...♖a2!. White could have tried 47.♕a1+ then, but the rook ending would be lost after 47...♖xa1 48.♖xd6 ♖b1. Black picks up the c-pawn and then puts his rook on g4.
**46...d1♕ 47.♕e8**



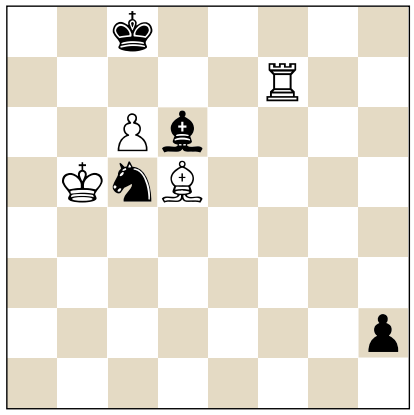
**47...♕d8!** Eliminating all the threats. White resigned. A model game in the style of Karpov.

Browne was an excellent self-promotor. For the book *Learn From the Grandmasters*, the contributors had been asked to annotate one of their own games, as well as a game that had highly impressed them. Browne annotated two of his own games, putting himself in the limelight twice over.

In Fischer's glory days, Browne said: 'If Fischer is god, then I'm the devil.' This was not so far-fetched. At the board, he seemed a bundle of nerves and agitation. An amateur player who had played Browne in an Open tournament put it as follows: 'He looks like a rock singer with a Fu Manchu and floral shirt, and a hyper, gangbuster manner. Every part of him seems to be in motion. He pulled at his hair. He snapped his fingers. He shuffled. I tried to ignore Browne's Mick Jagger act and make out the position.' Personally, he reminded me less of a rock singer than of an actor in a western. I had seen *The Culpepper Cattle Co*, and Browne resembled one of the actors, a rough cowboy.

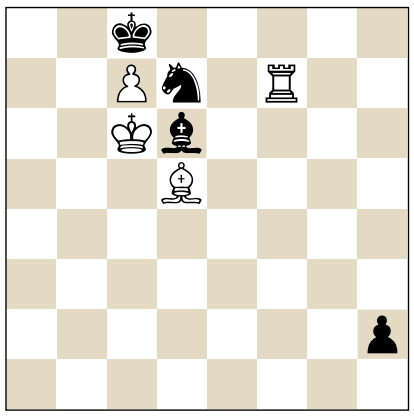
> 'Browne wanted me to bet with him on whether the ladies would show up.'

Browne played only one game against 'god'.



**Browne-Fischer**
Rovinj/Zagreb 1970
position after 87...♔c8

The position is clearly won, but Fischer's stubborn defensive line has held up. In those days, the time-control after move 40 was always 16 moves an hour, so Browne still had to make a move for the fourth time-control.
**88.c7** Browne could be very impatient, a failing that cost him dearly here. The routine 88.♖h7 would certainly have won, since it makes short work of Black's defences. Any king move is met by 89.c7+, followed by 90.♔c6, which only leaves 88...♘d3. But then Black is wrong-footed with 89.♗e6+ ♔d8 90.♖d7+ ♔e8 91.♗f7+! ♔f8 92.♗d5, and White wins. An elegant variation.
**88...♘d7!** Fischer clutches at the last straw.
**89.♔c6** The point. But now the win has evaporated. With 89.♖h7 White could have forced a pawn swap. The prevailing opinion at the time was that the resulting position is a draw, but the table base has shown that this material balance with opposite-coloured bishops is always winning for White.



**89...h1♕!** In combination with the next move this is a study-like escape.
**90.♗xh1 ♘e5+!** This check is what Browne had overlooked.
**91.♔b6 ♗c5+ 92.♔xc5 ♘xf7 93.♔b6 ♘d6 94.♗d5 ♔d7 95.♗c6+ ♔c8 96.♗d5 ♔d7 97.♗b3 ♘c8+ 98.♔b7 ♘e7**
Draw. The bishop vs knight ending offers no prospects whatsoever.

The first eight games Browne and I played against each other were all wins and losses: 4-4. In Las Palmas 1977, we agreed the first draw after a heated battle. Sometimes we also hung out together. In Las Palmas we were staying in the stately Santa Catalina Hotel, outside the centre. On a free afternoon, Browne and I decided to go into town to find female company. In one of the bars I got talking to a couple of promising ladies, but

Browne thought that things weren't proceeding fast enough. He could be very impatient, as witness his game against Fischer. At some point he took a beer mat, wrote down the name of our hotel and his room number and tossed it onto the bar counter. 'Look,' he said, 'if you are interested, you can find me here.' End of conversation. I found it all quite amusing. Interestingly enough, Browne wanted me to bet with him on whether the ladies would show up. He went for No, putting me in an awkward position. It stands to reason that he won the bet. Browne was always competing and proposing bets. In Maspalomas we were standing near a big swimming-pool. There I revenged myself by swimming across it faster than him. It was never about money. That wasn't the point.

Sometimes Browne revealed himself as an entrepreneur. A year after Las Palmas, he rang me just before the IBM tournament in Amsterdam. I had just won a strong tournament in the Montenegrin town of Niksic, together with Gulko. Browne congratulated me and asked me if I had bulletins from the tournament. There were no databases in those days, and top players relied on tournament bulletins for their information. I replied that I had only one set of bulletins. 'This means business for me,' said Browne. He had started trading in bulletins. We went to the federation office to have copies made. When the first set of copies from the Niksic tournament rolled out of the copier, Browne added some notes with a pen and then wrote: 'Copyright Walter Browne', after which he had the new version photocopied again. This was typically Browne. He did not always take life – or himself – seriously. Once, he got so worked up during time-trouble in an Open tournament that he hurled the chess clock through the hall – not his own clock this time, but that of his opponent. In U.S. open tournaments, as is still the case, players were expected to bring their own clocks. Browne saved the day with the words: 'I am sorry, but I know a good repair shop.'

I saw him for the last time in Taxco in 1985, during the Interzonal tournament. Browne caused a stir when he played Balashov: he installed an electric fan behind his opponent's chair. This was not really necessary, because we were playing on a mountain where it was reasonably cool. But it was difficult for poor Balashov, for each time he got up off his chair, he had to be careful not to get a painful whack from the machine. Later in the tournament, Browne bought a fly swatter to eliminate the scanty flies in the playing hall. He was equally unsuccessful as Don Quixote with the windmills; afterwards, Browne admitted that he hadn't hit a single fly. The Interzonal tournament did not go well for him. In the past he had also made quick exits in the fight for

**Jan Timman and Walter Browne going after fish this time. At the end Dutch IM Rob Hartoch.**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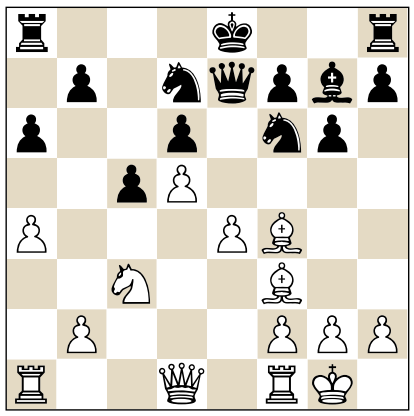
## Jan Timman

the world championship, probably because the tension got to him.

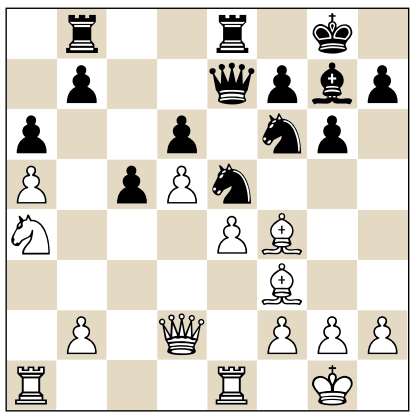
During his semi-retirement, Browne still played all kinds of solid and instructive games. Typical of his style, I think, is the following game from Browne's otherwise unsuccessful U.S. championship. With consistent play he pursues his strategic aim, and when Black hesitates in his defence, Browne finishes the game in style.

BI 12.12 – A75
**Walter Browne**
**Sergey Kudrin**
Berkeley 1984

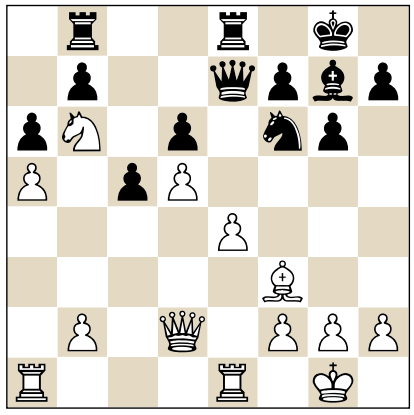
**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 g6 6.♘c3 ♗g7 7.♗f4 a6 8.a4 d6 9.e4 ♗g4 10.♗e2 ♗xf3 11.♗xf3 ♕e7 12.0-0 ♘bd7**



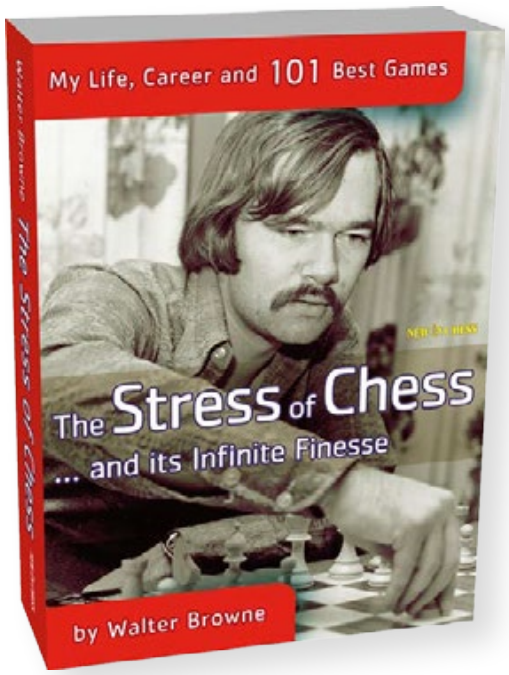
**13.a5** A principled continuation that has also been played by Gligoric and Portisch. White wants to restrict the black counterplay on the queenside as much as possible. **13...0-0 14.♖e1 ♖ab8 15.♘a4** The start of an interesting strategic plan. **15...♖fe8 16.♕d2 ♘e5** Logical, but the move has a drawback.



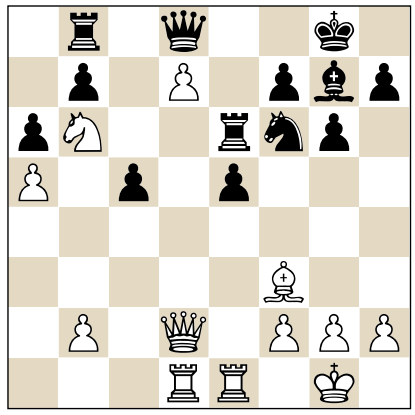
**17.♗xe5!** White voluntarily gives up the bishop pair in order to realize his plan.
**17...♕xe5 18.♘b6 ♕e7**



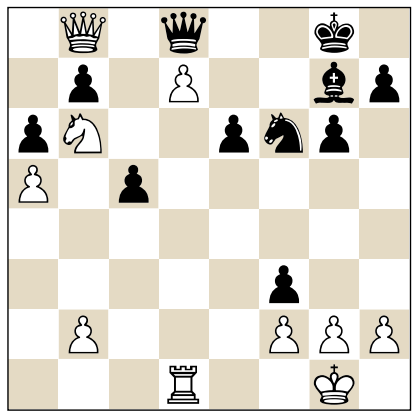
**19.e5!** This was the point. White offers a pawn in order to create a passed d-pawn that will become extremely dangerous.
**19...dxe5 20.d6 ♕d8** The queen is not a good blockading piece. Stronger was 20...♕e6 21.d7 ♖ed8, and the situation is not totally clear.
**21.d7!** There is nothing against advancing the passed pawn. The mighty knight on b6 is providing solid cover.
**21...♖e6 22.♖ad1**
White can afford to take the time to reinforce his position at his leisure.




**In 2012 Walter Browne's autobiographical games collection *The Stress of Chess ... and its Infinite Finesse* was published, a treasure trove of great and fascinating fights.**



**22...e4?**
An understandable attempt to free Black's game, but White has a made-to-measure refutation.
But Black was in serious difficulty. The positional threat of 23.♗d5 could only be prevented with 22...♗f8, but then White plays the strong 23.♕e3!, after which he is again threatening to play the bishop to d5. White is already winning in a higher sense.
**23.♕f4!**
Very beautiful. White doesn't need to protect his bishop, since he is going to capture on b8. Black is powerless.
**23...exf3 24.♖xe6 fxe6 25.♕xb8!**
Liquidating to an easy endgame.



**25...♕xb8 26.d8♕+ ♕xd8 27.♖xd8+ ♔f7 28.gxf3 ♔e7 29.♖b8 ♔d6 30.♖xb7 ♗h6 31.♘c4+ ♔d5 32.b3 ♔d4 33.♖b6 ♔c3 34.♖xa6 ♔xb3 35.♖xe6 ♘d5 36.♘b6 ♘b4 37.♖e5 ♘a6 38.♖e4 ♗d2 39.♘c4 ♗c3 40.♔f1 ♗d4 41.♘d2+ ♔c2 42.♔e2 ♘b4 43.♖e6 ♘d3 44.♖d6 ♘f4+ 45.♔f1 ♗e5 46.♖d7**
Black resigned. ■

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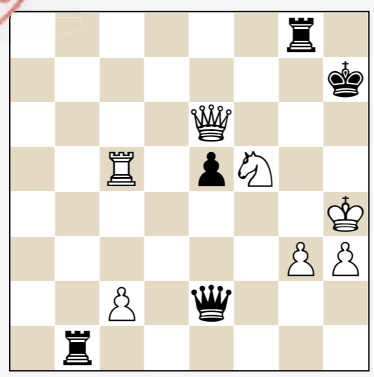
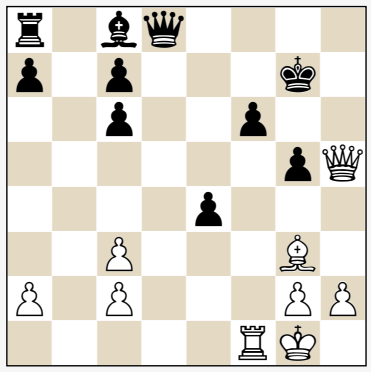


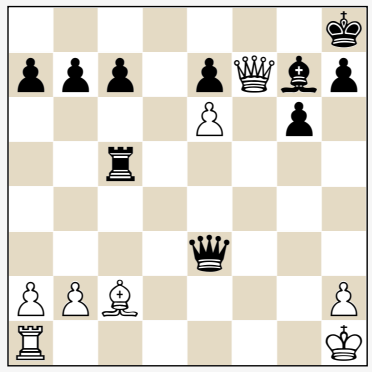
**1. Kollars-Osmanodja**
Ströbeck 2015

It's always an immense pleasure to finish your game with a move like **44...♕g4+!** White resigned in view of 45.hxg4 ♖h1 mate.



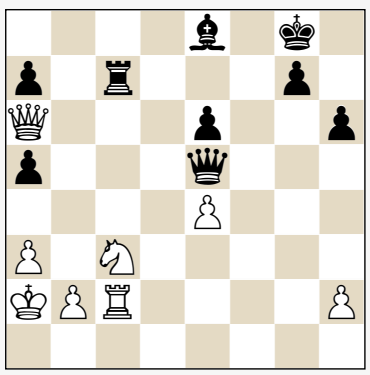
**2. Stojanovic-Yildiz**
Dubai 2015

**19.♗e5!** White is just in time to destroy the shield of the enemy king. Black resigned.



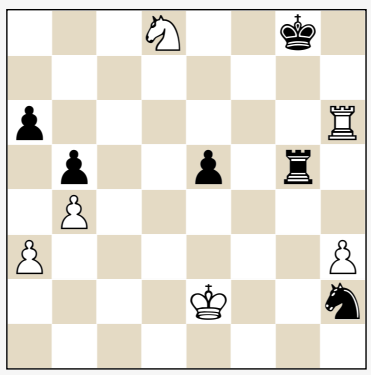
**3. Carlstedt-Vogel**
Ströbeck 2015

**25...♖f5! 26.♗xf5** 26.♕e8+ ♖f8 27.♕a4 ♕f3+ 28.♔g1 ♕f2+ 29.♔h1 ♗e5 leads to mate as well. **26...♕f3+ 27.♔g1 ♗d4** Mate.



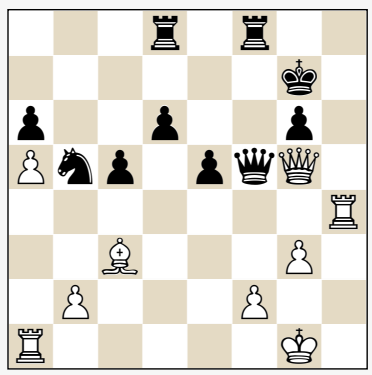
**4. Swapnil-Illingworth**
Pattaya 2015

**30...♗b5!** To free the queen from the trap would cost the exchange: 31.♕xb5 ♕xb5 32.♘xb5 ♖xc2, or the queen itself: 31.♕xa5 ♗c4+. White resigned.



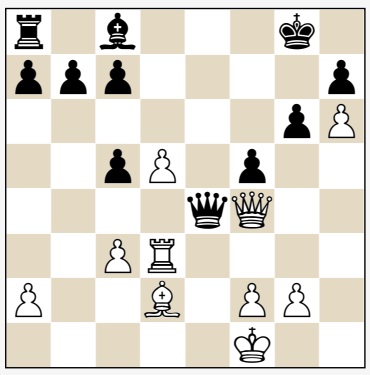
**5. Ezat-Mammadzada**
Dubai 2015

**40.♖h8+!** A clever liquidation. **40...♔xh8** 40...♔g7 41.♘e6+ ♔xh8 42.♘xg5 is equally hopeless. **41.♘f7+ ♔g7 42.♘xg5 ♔f6 43.♘f3!** The point. Black resigned.



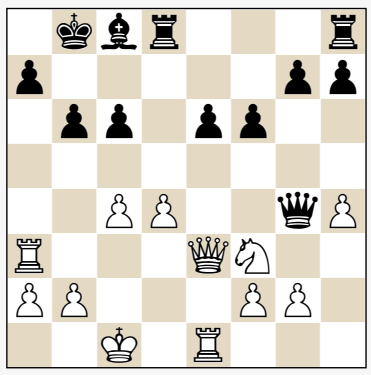
**6. Safarli-Grandelius**
Dubai 2015

**48.♕h6+ ♔f7 49.♖f4! exf4 50.♖e1!** Quietly strengthening the threats ♕g7 and ♕h7. A nasty surprise for the black king, who had prepared himself for a long voyage. **1-0**



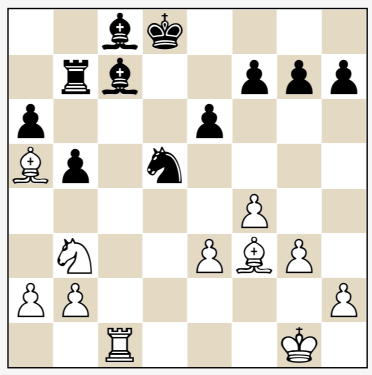
**7. Gajewski-Burg**
Bremen Bundesliga 2015

**24.♕xc7!** Inspired by Khismatullin! **24...♕xd3+ 25.♔g1 ♔f8 26.♕g7+ ♔e8 27.♕g8+ ♔e7** If 27...♔d7 28.♕f7+ and mate. **28.♗g5+ ♔d6 29.♗f4+ ♔e7 30.♕xh7+ ♔e8 31.♕xg6+ ♔d8 32.h7 1-0**



**8. Cornette-Zaragatski**
Schwäbisch Hall Bundesliga 2015

**24.♘e5! fxe5?** The lesser evil was 24...♕xg2 25.♘f7. **25.♕xe5+ ♔b7 26.♖xa7+! ♔xa7 27.♕c7+ ♔a6** 27...♗b7 28.♖e3 ♕h5 29.c5 or 29.d5. **28.♖e3 ♕h5 29.♖a3+ ♕a5 30.c5! ♔b5 31.♖xa5+ bxa5 32.b3! ♔b4 33.♔b2 ♗a6 34.♕b6+ ♗b5 35.a3** Mate.



**9. Zhou Weiqi-Izzat**
Canberra 2015

**22.♗xd5 exd5 23.♖xc7! ♖xc7 24.♘c5!** Now it's easy to see (much easier than in the diagrammed position I suppose) that Black is in a neat zugzwang. He resigned without executing the useless pawn moves.

# Viktor Moskalenko

**RATING:** 2525

**DATE OF BIRTH:** April 12, 1960

**PLACE OF BIRTH:** Odessa, Ukraine

**PLACE OF RESIDENCE:** Barcelona, Spain; works in Dubai, UAE

**What is your favourite colour?**
The main colours of nature: blue & green.

**What kind of food makes you happy?**
These days I enjoy Arabic food, especially Jabal Lebnan mixed grill.

**And what drink?**
Red wine. Since I've been working in the UAE, I enjoy fresh Laban (yoghurt).

**Who is your favourite author?**
Carlos Castaneda, Roger Joseph Zelazny.

**What is the best book you ever read?**
*The Sword of Truth* series by Terry Goodkind, *The Master and Margarita* by Mikhail Bulgakov.

**What is your all-time favourite movie?**
*The Matrix*, *Pulp Fiction*.

**What is your favourite TV series?**
Recently, *Once Upon a Time.*

**Do you have a favourite actor?**
Brad Pitt.

**And a favourite actress?**
Angelina Jolie.

**Do you have a favourite painter?**
Wassily Kandinsky, credited with painting one of the first purely abstract works.

**What was your best result ever?**
Ukraine Champion 1987. Shared first with Ivanchuk in Barcelona in 2005.

**What was the best game you ever played?**
Moskalenko-Jorge Gonzalez, Montcada, Spain 2006 (French Winawer).

**Who is your favourite chess player of all time?**
Since Mikhail Botvinnik developed fundamental chess theory, Bobby Fischer was the first best individual player in chess practice (and probably the last one, due to the extensive development of chess teams, chess computers, and even some already known chess cheaters).

**Is there a chess book that had a profound influence on you?**
David Bronstein's *Zurich 1953*, Alexander Nikitin's book on Kasparov (1998).

**What was the most exciting chess game you ever saw?**
Recently, the dramatic last round in the 2013 London Candidates': Ivanchuk-Kramnik, 1-0, and Carlsen-Svidler, 0-1.

**What is the best chess country in the world?**
Spain and the Netherlands because of the many chess events they have organized through the years.

**What are chess players particularly good at (except for chess)?**
Concentration and psychological stamina tend to be noticeably higher than among people who do not play chess.

**Do chess players have typical shortcomings?**
Many, of course, mainly connected with the advantages just mentioned.

**What is it that you appreciate most in a person?**
Creativity, sensibility, humour, balance.

**What is it that you dislike in a person?**
The lack thereof. However, being a chess coach helped me understand better that no one is perfect in this world.

**Do you have any superstitions concerning chess?**
Superstitions mainly appear because of lack of energy or knowledge, so I am always trying to be fit and to learn.

**Who or what would you like to be if you weren't yourself?**
I am quite happy with who I am. There is still enough inside me to explore.

**What is the best piece of advice you were ever given?**
When I was young, after I'd lost a game, a veteran player not only showed me the right move (instead of my mistake), but he also taught me the concept 'when your opponent starts tactics and your answer is not forced, first look at the intermediate moves!'

**Is there something you'd love to learn?**
To play the guitar and the piano.

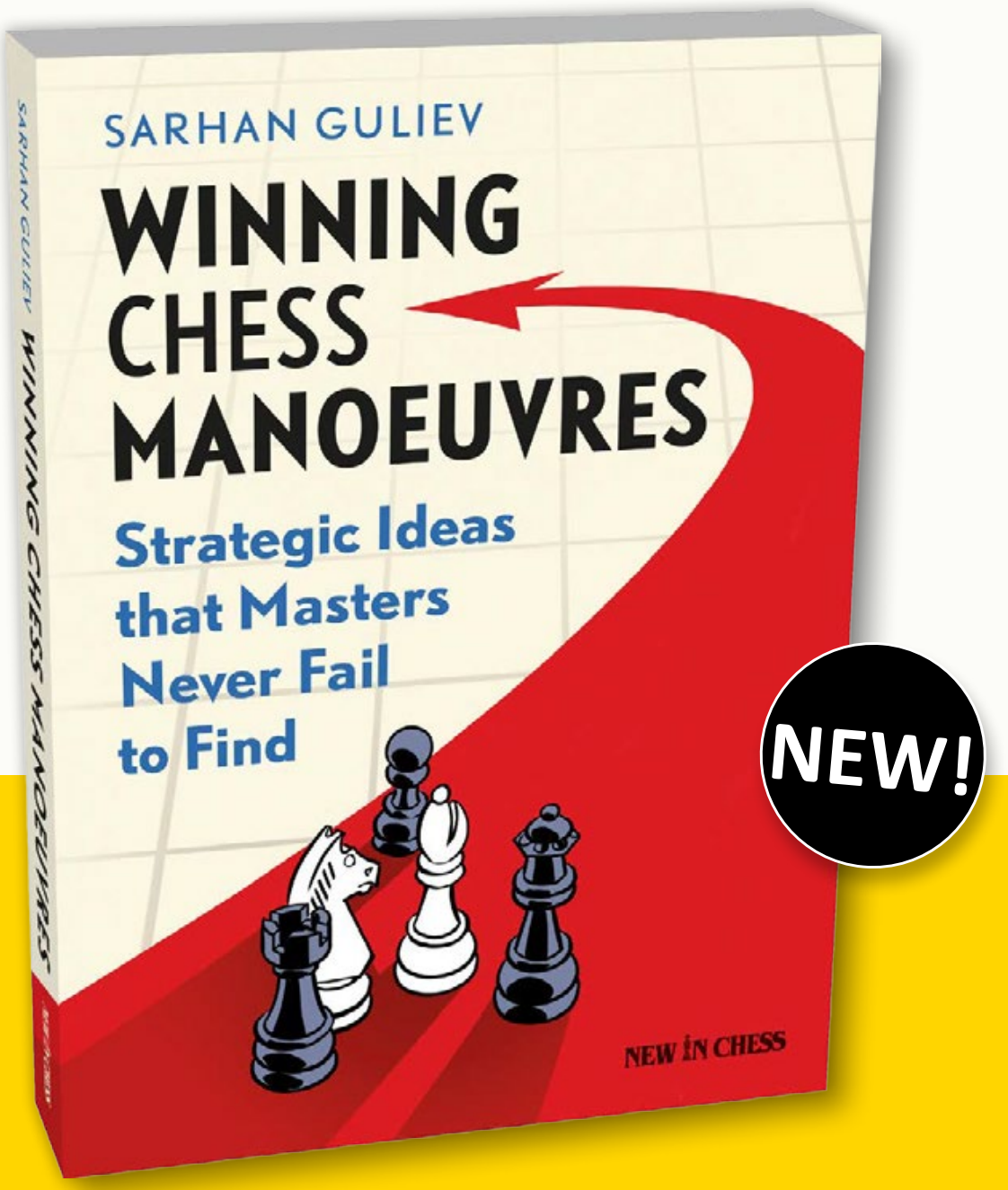
**Where is your favourite place in the world?**
Near the sea.

**What is your greatest fear?**
A mysterious fear: to forget that I was dead.

**Is a knowledge of chess useful in everyday life?**
Generally, the rules of chess are similar to life. I like dynamic chess.

**What is the best thing that was ever said about chess?**
'Let's start a new game.'

# Club players are often fumbling in the dark ...




A club player, staring at a position on the board is often fumbling in the dark, his head spinning with a multitude of general rules and vague notions. The master's approach is concrete. He knows how and where to look, because he has studied the games of other masters. GM **Sarhan Guliev** presents a wide range of strategic ideas that have been repeatedly employed by great chess players:

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